

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: USABURO KATAMOTO, retired boat builder

Usaburo Katamoto, Japanese, was born in Nakajima, Japan in 1896. He was the first born son. His father came to Hawaii in 1904 as a boat builder. In 1910, at the age of 14, Usaburo came to Hawaii to persuade his father to return to Japan. Instead, he persuaded his mother to come to Hawaii in 1911.

Usaburo was educated in Japan. He returned to Japan in 1915, married in 1918, and brought his family back to Hawaii in 1920. He became a boat builder. He also worked for the Hawaiian Tuna Packers and the Inter-Island Steamship Drydock. He was active in community work, including the Parent-Teachers Association and the Japanese language school

Usaburo was interned in New Mexico for over three years during World War II. His wife ran a small grocery store in Kakaako.

The Katamotos moved to Kahaluu, Oahu in 1951, where they still live.

TIME LINE

1896	birth: Nakajima, Japan
1910	moved to Kakaako
1915	returned to Japan
1918	married
1920	returned to Hawaii
1921	returned to Kakaako
1942	interned in Santa Fe, New Mexico
1945	returned to Hawaii
1951	moved to Kahaluu farm, Oahu

NOTES FROM AN UNRECORDED PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

with

Usaburo Katamoto
January 12, 1978
Kahaluu, Oahu, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia and Mark Matsunaga

Mr. Usaburo Katamoto was born in Nakajima, Japan in 1896. His father, Kunigoro, a boat builder, came to Hawaii in 1904. Father had a boat building shop at the end of Punchbowl Street on Kakaako Street. The property was leased from Liliuokalani.

Usaburo, the first-born son of the family, at the age of 13, came alone to Hawaii in July, 1910, to persuade his father to return to the family in Japan. The boat trip aboard the American Pacific Mail steamship, Mongolia, was usually a 10-day trip but the ship went aground in Yokohama and was delayed for 10 days. Usaburo quickly spent the money his uncle had given him for spending during the delay and consequently had nothing for snacks or spending on the trip. The fare was about \$60 and included meals. He slept in a bunk in steerage in the hold, was treated well, and never got seasick.

In Hawaii, he looked over his father's business and wrote to his mother and persuaded her to bring the family to Hawaii. She decided to come, bringing two more of her children. The oldest daughter was left behind because of illness. Mother, Iso (Tamura) was seasick and wasn't able to eat anything but rice soup on the voyage. After arriving, in about a week, she recovered fully.

Immigrants landed at Pier 6 or 7. From there, they were transferred to Sand Island on the Pioneer. They were not allowed on land until they'd received a health clearance and a legal paper. They stayed on Sand Island about a week and then were taken by boat to the immigration station at Pier 2.

One sister became ill with an ear problem which required surgery. A Doctor Smith did the operation. The youngster had to stay in Children's Hospital for six months. She could have visitors only once a day. She didn't speak English. Usaburo did. He'd learned in Japan in Japanese Upper School, two to three hours per week. He visited his sister in the hospital, getting there by bicycle every day.

When the sister recovered, she started at Pohukaina, where another brother was already a student. The sister was smart and quickly caught up with the brother who was older and ashamed to be in the same class. He transferred to Royal School. Two more children were born to the Katamoto family while they lived in Kakaako in 1912 and 1914.

The father's boat building business: 30 to 35-foot boats were made and then carried on men's shoulders to Pier 2. There were two or three other boat builders in the area according to Usaburo. Power engines on the boats were adopted in 1906 or 1907. Von Hamm Young and the Honolulu Iron Works made the engines. The biggest engines were heavy duty 30 or 40 horsepower engines. Father "gambled" in his business, mortgaging his boats to get the engines. It seemed to work out. He also at one time built a freight boat for Kamokila Campbell, wife of MacFarlane (Hawaiian Tuna Packers) so that the Chinese farmers in the Kahaluu area could ship their rice to market in Honolulu.

Mr. Katamoto talked about the 35 to 36-foot aku boats which were operated by 6, 7, or 8 men, sailing in the fair wind off the harbor entrance or at Pearl Harbor. They didn't have to go far for big catches. He related that catches were so good that sometimes they were just dumping fish off Diamond Head because they couldn't sell them all. At times, the kids were given fish for nothing. They would borrow a buggy, load up five or six baskets with fish and sell them for 25 cents a piece.

There was a floating dry dock on Pier 4 side, next to the coast guard, which was used for interisland boats. The Kilauea was too large so the entrance was deepened and dredged. The same floating dry dock is now at Pier 40, owned by Hawaiian Dredging. Pier 2 by Fort Armstrong was also deepened.

In 1915, the business was good. Father was making good money. Mr. Katamoto worked the whole day helping his father. His brother came home from school in the early afternoon and began working too. The hired men left at 5 o'clock (p.m.) and the brothers would put the tools away, eat, and Usaburo would go off to night school. Father said the boys need more education. Usaburo was more interested in working to make money to go back to Japan; thus, he worked days and went to school nights. Classes were held in the Buddhist Church on South Street above Queen. The teacher, a Canadian, lived in the dormitory on the office side of Kawaiahao Church. Usaburo was given the job of walking the teacher to and from the dormitory because he was the youngest student. He attended night classes for a year and a half.

Mrs. Katamoto became frightened when the hostilities that lead to the First World War broke out. Japan was allied with Britain and the United States was neutral. Japan attacked a German base in China (Tsingtao). A wooden German warship limped into Honolulu Harbor at Pier 6 with engine trouble. Geier, a Japanese battle ship was outside the harbor entrance and a couple of their sailing ships remained nearby. Usaburo recalls going down every day to watch work on the repair of the engine. Mother became afraid that if Japan and the United States went to war, the family wouldn't be able to get back to Japan. Since "she was the boss" and an uncle had bought a house and lot in Japan, Usaburo was sent ahead to check out the property. The family moved back to Japan and a bad luck period ensued. One younger sister died and then the sister who had the ear operation passed away also. Within a year after that, Mother passed away too. (The ship was probably the cruise ship Geier. The U.S. declared war on Germany April 16, 1917.)

Before her death, however, Mother had arranged a marriage for Usaburo. He was married in 1918. Young men reaching the age of 20 in Japan were required to perform military service. There were many international frictions at that time and Usaburo made application to return to Hawaii in 1919. His father tried to get a visa for him and he applied for a passport. The process took a long time but in September of 1920, after being required to show a degree of financial independence (\$100 in American money), he returned to Hawaii. The fare was about \$180.

Usaburo's eldest daughter was born in December 1920. His wife had the flu and was hospitalized. He worked by day and took care of his wife at the hospital at night. A male friend who was on strike from the Waialua Plantation and whose wife was also in the hospital, took care of Mrs. Katamoto during the day in the hospital.

In 1920, Mr. Katamoto moved back from Japan to friends' in Moiliili, then to the Kakaako area on the Waikiki side of the old brewery. He had gone to work at the Honolulu Floating Dry Dock and was paid 50 cents per day. Other workers were getting paid 60 to 75 cents per day. He asked the supervisor why and was told if he didn't like it, he could quit. The carpenters' union didn't want Chinese or Japanese in the union. The other employees were Danes, Germans, Austrians, etc. Usaburo left. He worked for a Japanese outfit for a time but decided it was best to get back in business for himself as there was just no profit left over, having worked for someone else. His father agreed to return from Japan to help him and managed to come on the last ship from Japan before the regulations changed in 1922 (Japanese Exclusion Act, 1924). He had to pay first class in order to come, which cost about \$1,000.

Katamoto entered into tanomoshi with his own and his father's friends to acquire capital to purchase not one but two boat businesses, including the one the father had had before. The other business owner knew that his business would suffer with the re-opening of Katamoto's and because of personal problems, the other owner felt it would be best to work for the Katamotos.

In 1923, Japan suffered a disastrous earthquake and Katamoto's father was called back to Japan to take care of a brother.

In 1926-27, Usaburo ran the drydock for the Tuna Packers. His salary was \$150 per month (top wages for the time) plus, he was given 25 cents on every dollar over and above the costs of the work he did.

He also worked in the stock brokerage business for a time (office is now Dean Witter). He and Chinn Ho started there at about the same time. Katamoto left because of the amount of money required for such items as clothing to work there. In 1929, Mr. Katamoto "lost everything." He stayed with the Tuna Packers until 1936 when he hurt his foot and the company wanted him to quit.

Tape No. 3-26-1-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Usaburo Katamoto (UK)

January 17, 1978

Kahaluu, Oahu, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG) and Mark Matsunaga (MM)*

GG: This is an interview with Usaburo Katamoto, January 17, 1978, in his home in Kahaluu.

I wondered if today, maybe you sort of got us up to the First World War the last time. So maybe, if we could go from there this time, and maybe I think it was about 1921, maybe, when the Japanese language school. Were you involved at that time with that?

UK: Yeah. This is when the Second World War broke out, you know. We was came to First World War. Now we coming to second war.

GG: You came back to Kakaako in 1921, is that right? From Japan?

UK: Yeah.

UK's wife: 1920.

UK: 1920.

GG: So you came back when they had the strike and the flu was going on.

UK: That's right, that's right.

GG: Did anybody in your family get the flu?

UK: Wife got it from the ship. See, when she got up from the trip, she laid up. As I told you last time, we had to go to Sand Island to quarantine for Public Health inspection and stay there until inspection over. And if we pass, we go to--not the Mainland. Whatever you call that. Appear to immigration stations and confined there until your papers are in order. Is everything in order, then turn you loose. We didn't need stop overnight. I think we were discharged the same day. Everything was in line.

* Mr. Matsunaga is Usaburo Katamoto's grandson.

And my friend, that's my own friend who lives in Moiliili. This used to be Honolulu Stadium, right around that area. And his family, this Muramaru's brother was living nearby. So we went up to his place. We had no place. Instead go in a hotel, (but) it's better live in friend's house where they invite us. So we went up there. Stay two, three days. Then she (wife) was pregnant, you see.

So my friend's mother who I used to know from before, she said, "You better call a doctor."

I call doctor, doctor says, "You got the flu." He says, "I won't guarantee save you baby. I will try save the mother."

So he put her into Kuakini Hospital, quarantine area. So nobody to take care.

Well, I haven't got the money to buy special nurse, hire nurse, so I says, "I'll take care, I'm not working."

Then at the time, folks came up from our place. My mother's second cousin, Tanaka from Waialua Plantation, was in Kuakini with the flu at the same time. Since the plantation workers were on strike, the husband volunteered to take care of my wife, so I did not need to hire special nurses.

I was able to go out into the Kakaako area and try to collect on the credit extended to Japanese fishermen by my father who built their boats. He had extended about \$3,000 to \$4,000, but it was a bad time--deflation after the First World War--and no one could pay. I still remember I could only collect \$30 out of all of that. It's no use crying. If you can't make it, you can't make it. So you see, I thought if the man takes care of my wife, I might as well work. At the same time I went Honolulu Floating Dry Dock, owned by Inter Island Steamship Navigation Company. (Later, Inter Island Steamship Navigation Company, Inc., was dissolved and reorganized to become what is known today as Hawaiian Air.) They come. The superintendent or the manager was my father's friend.

So I went up to him and says, "I came back and I need a job. I'm broke. My wife in hospital, you know."

He says, "Sure, come out work." (At that time this company did not hire Japanese. The only reason I got the job was because he was my father's friend. The union was Shiprite Brotherhood of America. It was a very small union, about 15 to 20 men, all who were originally from European countries, Norway, Denmark and Germany. There weren't very many men because we mainly took care of repairs as the big ships were made on the Mainland. These men did not grumble about me because they remembered me as a child.)

So I start work the next day. And I come back to the hospital after work and I stay in the hospital. Hospital clerks were my friend before I left Hawaii. There were still couple of them working in there. So I have pretty good pulls, you see. And they overlook me and don't (en)force the regulation. So I could stay there. Then I could work in the morning, come back in the evening. And they used to joke. They used to tell, "This is not a hotel, You got to get out."

(Laughter)

Oh, I say, "I get out in time."

That went (on for a couple of weeks). My wife was in quarantine for 10 days because she got pneumonia following the flu. After that, she was in a regular ward for (about 11 days, recovering.)

And I figure, when she got all right, I figured no stay in Moiliili. I come down to work in Kakaako every morning. It's pretty tough. No more bus those days. Used to be only streetcar, you remember? I used to take a bike, usually ride a bicycle and come down. And it pretty tough, so I figured I stay in Kakaako, then I'll rent a house. By old brewery.

GG: What street was that on?

UK: Below Queen. (Makai)

GG: Right. What was the house like?

UK: Oh, was just a old, you know, shabby duplex. Like Japanese used to live in those days. You remember? You may not. (Laughs)

GG: Plantation style, sort of? Wood frame?

UK: Yeah, it's just a cheap cottage building, no.

GG: How many rooms had?

UK: In one house, (the owner) made it for two family (to) live. And one family lives in....well, there's a kitchen, then dining room. We use the kitchen, dining room for sleep at night. (We had three rooms-- kitchen-dining room, living room and a very small bedroom. We just lay a mat for our bed. At first, we had only kerosene lamp for light, but later on we had electric light. We had to buy a bed because I did very hard work and I couldn't get used to sleeping on the floor. The bed just fit in the bedroom.)

MM: The house was, you said, Diamond Head side, yeah, of the brewery?

UK: Yeah.

MM: By the (Kakaako) fire station?

UK: Yeah. Like the old cottage, the Hawaiians used to live and they converted to duplex.

GG: Who lived next door, or in the other part of the building?

UK: That's right. That was my friend and my father's friend, same time. In fact, we made a boat for him before we left to Japan. And we left the boat for them. They used to operate for my father, you see. And the proposition was, if the boat is paid up we would give them as a bonus. And that's what we did. And they was hard working fishermen. They had two brothers and one good friend, three of them.

GG: And what was the name?

UK's wife: Yoshida.

UK: Then Yoshida and Odamura. These three brothers, different name because one was adopted by different family, but they all were working together. They really close. So we left the boat for them when my father left for Japan. Oh, they were good. In fact, they came up the hospital all the time [when UK's wife was ill] and ask me if I need spending money and (if) we need the money to pay hospital, they going to advance. And they did. That family still lives there. We stayed up [i.e., kept up the friendship] with their kids, you know.

GG: Did you share the kitchen with them or each had its own kitchen?

UK: Well, we had separate kitchens. Small kitchen, but separate cooking over here.

GG: What about the bathroom? You had inside bathroom?

UK: (Toilet was inside the house. We had sewer system in the area.) There used to be a public bath with the small charge. No, I think we used to pay \$2 a month, or something like that for one family. (We took showers in a semi-public place. We didn't pay anything for the use of their facilities, but we bought all our supplies and groceries from the people who had the bath house. Their name was Fujikawa.

GG: Where was the bath?

UK: Well, by the neighbor. Well, across the street. There was a store building.

GG: It was across the...

UK: Right next to Kawaiahao graveyard. You know, right off the Kawaiahao churchyard? The graveyard toward Queen Street side. There was a store building. The land belonged to Kawaiahao Church and they lease it to this fellow, build up a store. That's a pretty big store was, (they supplied) about 40 families with their needs.

GG: Was that...

UK: Long building...

GG: What did they call it? Was it Magoon Block?

UK: Well, no. That's toward downtown side. There was a Magoon Block and South Street. And there was....

GG: Kumalae Block?

UK: Kumalae Block. No, that I don't know. The Kakaako Mission in later days was downtown side of the park. South Street?

GG: Do you remember the name? Did this big building have a name?

UK: That's owned by Date. We used to call them "Date Camp." Also he had a store. You know, grocery store. And specialize on peanuts. Wholesale. He been doing all kinds of things, you know, in those days. Yeah, that's right. And later on, way downtown side, town side of the Punchbowl Street, another smaller size building like that. There was a store in the same block. And they had closed that. I think the tax office bin took over, or something. So that store owner move into the Date block. I think Date went back to Japan.

And this fellow, Fujikawa, bought that place. And established his store there. Grocery store. And been operating that way. His son about my age was one of the owner of International [Kokusai] Theatre in Aala area. You know the moving picture houses? There. Oh, yeah. One of the hospital clerk, another of my friend was his brother. So they all be fairly close, you know.

There was quite few Japanese lives in Kakaako area. That is, our area. So all over town somebody working something.

(Laughter)

They all had pretty good position. So whenever we go places, used to get pretty good help from them.

GG: Now, was the boat yard right next to where you had your duplex, where you live?

UK: No. Boat yard is way down the end of the Punchbowl Street. By that turn (where Punchbowl curved). But it's only two, three-minute ride, you see? If you take a bike, why it's only minute.

MM: You folks are pretty close to Cooke Street then, you folks' house?

UK: No. Cooke Street way over Waikiki side yet. You see, you go Cooke Street and Coral Street, then Keawe Street, then South Street, you see.

(We stayed in the cottage for about one year and then we bought the ship yard--boat shop. Our next house was within this yard. Downstairs was the bedrooms. Half of the downstairs was our tool shed. This was located on Kakaako Street. My father's original shop was next door. When we left to go back to Japan [1915] we sold it to a man. But when I set up my own shop, he knew he would be out of business, as all the customers would soon be coming to me as they knew my father. So he wanted to sell me his shop, so I bought it. So we owned two boat shops side-by-side.)

That's the main street. Then you come to Punchbowl Street. Or Kakaako Street.

MM: Yeah. So you guys were by South Street then? The house?

UK: No. We were by Punchbowl and Kakaako. Where my place where we [used to live.]

GG: That's where the boat was.

UK: Yeah. That's near South Street.

MM: And Date Camp was across Queen Street?

UK: Yeah. Side of Queen Street. It's a part of the Kawaiahao Church. The graveyard is there now.

MM: Now got the gas station and the store [over there], too, eh?

UK: Oh, that's next to South Street. Oh, that's a separate land again. Up to Kawaiahao Street is belong to Kawaiahao Church. Oh, how I can say it? In olden days, the royal family, you might say, or their chiefs or the warrior's family used to live that area from Punchbowl mountain to the sea. That's one branch. And the next one is used to live Ward Street. Or up to Kapiolani hillside, you know. Way up till end of the Makiki side of the Punchbowl. Down to the sea. They all belong to the, you know, same [family] members rather. You might say.

So you see, all Hawaiian cottages where old Hawaiians used to be, lived well, along that line. In that order, one is one group, the other is next group. And from there to Waikiki there's nothing much, but swamp land and duck pond where's Ala Moana Shopping Center now. There was duck pond. I don't know [if] you remember.

GG: Yeah, I remember.

UK: See, we used to go swim in the morning. We get up 5:30 or 6:00 (a.m.). We take a bike. We go to the Seaside Hotel where--it's Royal [Hawaiian] Hotel now. Hawaiian or Sheraton Waikiki, I guess. Something around there. There is a public bath like from Seaside Hotel. We used to go swim up there because our friend's aunty, or something was running that place. And she used to let us go in. Without charging, you see.

And gave us towel. So we'd have pretty good fun.

GG: This was before you went back to Japan? When you were younger?

UK: Yeah. Yeah, before 1915. So, all right around that area, where more or less, like Ala Moana Park now, used to be a rubbish dump. The fire been burning all the time. There's nothing but rubbish dump.

GG: Right next now, you had your duplex. Were there other people living close by you too?

UK: No, there's one more camp. One more duplex like that. And it's small camp. Only two houses in that area. Another with four families.

GG: But they still call that a camp, even though was only four families?

UK: Yeah, yeah,

MM: Now, what was the name of you folks' camp?

UK: Oh, I don't think there was any name. They commonly call "Beer Camp." Beer Factory Camp. Oh, wait a minute. I think we used to call "Beer House." "Beer House Camp," or something like that.

Even the Punchbowl Street there was two blocks like that, too. Two separate unit. Each block had about 20, one [block], 20 families used to live. And they had one grocery store which would supply the whole area. Had all kind of different, you know, merchants who supply us. To take care the families lived in there. In those days, it's very hard to get the cash. So everything's charged. When they be able to get paid. They carry on credit, you see, all the time.

GG: Did all of the merchants extend credit or maybe some...

UK: Yeah, all of them. 'Cause that's the only way you can do the business in those days. There's no such thing as cash and carry. Because people didn't have enough cash. I mean, especially like Japanese immigrants.

GG: Where did you do your shopping then? You say only one store?

UK: Yeah, usually one or two. If you think this block store is higher than the other stores in the block, that, you free go. You can go wherever you want if you can extend your credit. You know what I mean?

GG: The store owner had to know you before he would...

UK: That's right. That's right. Otherwise they won't give you credit. They'll have a hard time collecting money.

MM: Mostly Chinese, eh? Owned the stores at first? Lot of Japanese or Chinese?

UK: Yeah, usually Japanese and some Chinese.

GG: And where did, say Hawaiian people, live, or Portuguese people live? Did you have any connection...

UK: Yeah. They're free to buy any place. 'Cause they mostly like to have a more easier to get the cash than Japanese. But in those days, as far as I remember, very few Portuguese live in our area. 'Cause our area, I mean, Japanese camp like. But the most Portuguese lives in, toward Waikiki. What you call that place now? Past Cooke Street. The next one is Ward Avenue now. In between. Right around there. Few Portuguese used to be living in there. They mostly landowners. They bought the land from Hawaiian or somehow they got it. As far as I remember, Portuguese usually mostly up where Punchbowl, Lusitara area. But some of them came down to, below, 'cause they had draying company. HC & D [Honolulu Construction and Draying Company] now. Used to be Hustace Peck. They had the dray business. No automobile, no trucks. Whatever they do is a horse and buggy and mules and drays. You know, make a big boat. I remember the company send a 10, 12-team mules, or what do you call that? Donkeys. And Portuguese are smart handling animal. That's why they came down to Kakaako area, I believe.. Any time we hire big drays, Portuguese are the drivers. Yeah, any time we take a big boat we had those team, and they all of them used to be either Portuguese or big Hawaiians.

So is the lumberyard dealers, eh? Lewers and Cooke was the big lumber dealer then. Lewers and Cooke, and Allen and Robinson. Those are two big lumber dealers. Now their drivers was all Hawaiians or Portuguese. There's no Japanese or Chinese 'cause that was...(Laughs)... they can't handle animals.

GG: Okay, most of the Japanese then were fishermen or what other kinds of things?

UK: Well.... In Kakaako area, mostly like fishermen. The fishermen used to live in Kakaako. Majority. These aku boat fishermen that came from a certain district of Japan was living in town. The reason why 'cause some of the boat was allowed in main harbor. In Honolulu main harbor. And somewhere around Piers 15, 16 area. You know, in those days now Aala Market used to be water. Boat was tied up to the King Street. And there was some kind of a camp that built on the water. Their boat was tied next to the water. I used to go make a collection once in a while. Repair building too. So I been quite familiar.

MM: This was fishermen from what camp?

UK: Wakayama [Prefecture]. Mostly. Aku fishermen from Wakayama.

MM: So the Kakaako fishermen were from where?

UK: The Kakaako fishermen from all the rest of the place. Mostly Yamaguchi, Hiroshima [Prefectures]. Then later days, they dredge the harbor. Pier 15, 16 area. They fill up that water which is Aala Market now. Beyond the waterfront.

MM: About when was this?

UK: Oh, it was around, must be around 1912 or 1913, I think. I'm not sure of the date. Anyway...

GG: That was before you went back to Japan then?

UK: Yeah, yeah.

GG: And where did the Hawaiians live, now, in Kakaako?

UK: Used to live around our place. Around in front our place there's a two house. Two families used to live. And up above, below Kawaiahao and around Date Camp, just below Queen Street. I can name, I can count I think. As far as six. And above the Queen Street, between the brewery and Queen Street, there was four or five families. They used to make a living by fishing--hukilau. And they headquartered, their ground was where Pier 2 now. They used to be a water. Water used to come up to knee-high around then. You know? When they dredge that harbor entrance, then they fill up that place. Make it, Pier 2 anyway right now. In front the immigration station up to the Fort Armstrong. Right across from Fort Armstrong was water. I'm not too familiar. I can't remember that good but I know, I'm certain, right by immigration station used to be a knee-high water. And they used to have a wooden bridge where your immigrant come from Sand Island to immigration station. I still remember that, so it must be.

GG: And you had to walk across the bridge from Sand Island?

UK: No, there was a ferry boat, ship. We used to call 'em "Pioneer." The name of the boat is Pioneer. That was operate by Burger-Ramblin Line. In the old days, they sold that, they discontinued that and sold that City Mill company. Ai. And he made it---I think it's bigger. Make it freight carrier. That's my father's friend as well as my friend, a German craftsman [Puck]. [You remember] I was talking about union the other day? Well, he's one of the member. 'Cause his family used to live in Kaimuki. I was pretty good friends after awhile.

UK: Ah, Peter Puck. Peter is a name. Puck was a family name. He really was a craftsman. He was from Germany, I think. I think he's from German. His wife is German, I know. Strictly. And we've been friend all the time after that. In fact, he is one of the guy that open up [for larger vessels] at Kewalo Basin. See, he took that Pioneer, the ferry Pioneer, to Kewalo Basin. The Kewalo Basin entrance so shallow. It was very danger. They got to pick up a good, calm day to come in. And he enter that harbor and pull the boat, ferry ship up to the Ward Avenue. Right on Waikiki side. And he made the temporary shop right there by the Ward Avenue and made the boat around 30 feet longer, I think. Made quite a bit longer, you know.

MM: He made his shop over there? He had to buy the land, eh?

UK: No, he just rent the land.

MM: Oh, from the Hawaiians?

UK: I think it was already belong to Bishop Estates. See, the Bishop Estates or Ward Estate. It's all the individual Hawaiian land all over very scarce. What they did, they exchange the land for the whiskeys. (Laughs) All the big fellows get all the land. Where they make the condition that they live same premises their lifetime, something like that. So they had the place to live, but I think that was their lifetime only. 'Cause mostly it was under that condition if I remember correctly. That's why very few individuals owners. They all belong to big estates. Mostly Bishop Estates and Ward Estates. Those two estates (are) the most landowners in Kakaako area anyway.

Like I would say, we started that Pioneer business, so let's go through it at first I think. Then, when they finish that Pioneer, it's hard to get out, the entrance now. The boat get bigger and get more draft, you know. So they had to dredge it. They work through Territory Government and the Harbor Board and they got that thing dredged out. Then they fill up most the land by Pier 2. Where is that---Waikiki area. Now they [Territory Government] investing Experimental Station and the boat, ah, sailor. Used to be McCoy's boathouse. Anyway, the town side or Ewa side of a park, you know. They fill up that place. Or else they cut off the entrance. Then secondary, then [they] open up the Hawaiian Tuna Packers. That Peter Puck open up that dry dock. Tuna packers dry dock. With a small scale. I think he got help from Ai and in later days my boss, Paul Boyer. Those German guys that help them out to establish this dry dock business. There's only one, you see. All they had Honolulu Floating Dry Dock in main harbor. And most fishing boat was not allowed in main harbor. Getting too many. And only few boats that come in. And those guys lived in Kakaako area, hauled that small boat (and) switch over to Kewalo Basin. So, they was forced to build a small pier. And they all built this catwalk like, you know, with wooden construction.

UK: And that was....

UK's wife: 1921.

UK: It was when they dredge out harbor entrance. You know, in those days, this coal ship used to come in. Then a few was mostly dependent on coal. Right in front my place in Kakaako Street there was an empty lot. They all belong to Bishop Estates. Right back of the Honolulu Ironworks. No. Used to be a big, empty area to store coal, you know. And one day a lump of coal, they drip in the sea. A few Japanese-- I know those fellows--they, get a small, three feet by four feet, you know, drag net pipe with a frame on. They drag the bottom of the sea to pick up the coal. And they use to make pretty good money with

it. More than work they work for somebody or more than they go out fishing. And they should. As long as they got the coal there's no trouble selling it. So there was a few guys on the island. I know two or three guys who used to do that. So one day, dredge that entrance. You know, where the end of the dredging pipe, end of the pipe. They carry the mud which they dredge with the water faucet. And, ah, when the water runs off you can see all the coal, shows up. So, everybody used to go and pick--those who had no job. Because it's your moneys. As long as you got them you have no trouble to sell them.

Then once in a while, you pick up opium. Yeah. I remember somebody being pick it up often today? But everybody goes the following day. Those things don't come up everyday, you know.

(Laughter)

UK: Oh, used to have a lots of fun, especially, female ain't got much to do around the house. Why, they just go and watch for 'em. If they pick up....

MM: Big money, eh, that? Who did they used to sell the opium to?

UK: Who they sell 'em to? I think was Chinese. Hui used to come around and hunt for it. Or looking for. They usually heard somebody pick up one. They sure enough, they right there to buy.

(Laughter)

MM: You said your friend, Peter Puck, they got the Territory Government to dredge Kewalo Basin entrance?

UK: Yeah.

MM: What year was that?

UK: Oh, it's somewhere around.... Wait a minute. That was after 1920? Or before I went back. Wait now. Wait. Oh, it must be after 1921. Oh, wait now. Let me trace that. Hoiija Kakaako e itta no wa? [Well, now when was it that you went to Kakaako?] Ah, Queen Street itta no 1920 deshoo. Yappari anta tachi mitta no. [When we went to Queen Street, it must have been about 1920. After all, we saw you folks, didn't we.]

UK's wife: 1921 you bought the shop Queen...

UK: Oh, 1921 datta ka no? [Was it 1920?] 1921 dakara. [So it was 1921.] Somewhere around 1922. Somewhere around 1922 or 1923. I'm not sure. Since I get this [present] sickness three, four years, I can't remember very good. I got to think very hard and trace back to get it right, you know.

UK's wife: Us ga itte come 1920 ni come wa, Tenyo Maru de kita i na. [Us come back in 1920 on the Tenyo Maru.]

UK: Yeah.

SIDE TWO [Trying to get tapes going--background noise]

GG: So when did you get involved with the Japanese schools?

UK: My biggest girl was born in 1922, 1921. After she started school so around five years later. Five years, 1927. Now, I wonder what year was Japanese community took that case to court.

GG: 1922, I think, I read in the book.

UK: Was it 1922?

GG: I think so.

UK: Wasn't it later?

GG: I don't know.

UK: Let's see that, you had Japanese [book], eh. Maybe I can pick up from that.

UK: ...the kid was going school then, but, maybe before that.

GG: It tells in here some---

UK: I guess around (then). First was the proper test case on 1928, you say?

GG: No. 1923. Then they decided that those laws were not right. In 1926 and 1927. So your daughter must have been in school when they finally made the decision that it was unconstitutional.

UK: Yeah. I think I was mixed up before that. Yeah, I remember now. I was mixed up before [about when my] daughter in the school. I think I must be mixed up at very beginning. See, that's all in the community and the kids are growing up, so they think we all talked it [Japanese school]. We need Japanese schooling anyway. Yeah, I think so. Fred Makino, the editor of the Hawaii Hochi, he used to come around my shop quite often. He is one of the sea sport man, you know. And he had letter to Kuliouou. I mean he's a foresome builder catamaran. So he can win over to his family. Yeah. So, I must [have been] mixed up since the start of that trouble. That means 1923 is it.

GG: Well, the trouble, I think, started in 1921. But then it was 1923 before they took it to court.

UK: Yeah. Oh, just around, when they started taking it to court. I see. See, at the time, Hawaii Times used to be call Nippu Jiji. The Territory Prosecutor, he favored not to operate foreign language school. He say it's not good for the U.S. Then Makino says, "Now is private rights should go first." That was his attitude, I think.

So, there was two friction among Japanese community, too, you see. And one side, were the Nippu Jiji. They says if you are connected with it, "You want to lose all your property? You want to lose all your personal right?" That was a propaganda they use. You know, community didn't know much about the law or your constitutional right, so they almost believe anything. But anyway, there was divided in two. Friction. And I was mixed up with the one that favoring language school. Foreign language school. Yeah, I recall then now. I would have to be because all my community was with Fred Makino. You know, it's kind of hard to understand, but public used go with your side with the things prevalent, right or wrong. We had no ground judging right or wrong. We just follow the crowd. (Laughs) It's kind of hard to understand, but that's how used to work anyway.

GG: So what happened in Kakaako itself, then? With the Japanese school there?

UK: There was two schools. Kakaako Japanese Language School and Kakaako-Alapai Japanese Language School. (There were two Japanese schools in Kakaako. One was Kakaako Japanese Language School and the other was Kakaako-Alapai Japanese Language School.)

Before the school system was formally developed around 1908-1910, they used to have lessons in a private home. All the children regardless of their age were taught together. I believe one of these teachers was a man named Yoshino. Yoshino's private school was near Keawe Street and Halekauwila.

Kakaako Japanese Language School was near Coral and makai side of Queen Street. This was the school I was involved in and my children eventually attended this school. Alapai-Kakaako Japanese Language School was located Ewa of Ward Avenue near Pohukaina and Halekauwila Street.

In the beginning we needed the two schools as there were too many children to be taught privately so they existed peacefully side by side. However, in later years the two schools became very competitive as each school wanted the children in the area to come to their school so that they could afford to hire a teacher. The more students there were the less everyone had to pay in monthly dues.)

UK: And that's why, I think, the trouble started. So this friction was coming from way back. You know, I'm describing the right way. Can you understand what I driving at?

GG: Yes. Right.

UK: And that's when it carried right along this language school case. So one side is against. One side is favored to. And they came to play in separate group.

GG: Did it divide the Japanese community, too?

UK: That's right.

GG: Maybe, the people you were friends with before, they feel different than you?

UK: That's right. Yeah. Uh huh. And later days, I tried hard to bring it together. But, it's so many roots that you can't overcome. Finally we came to agreement but it's a loss for both sides. "So, let's come together." And we came together in front. But in the back, still two groups, you know. Even today, it's dragging along. Then I got disgusted. I move out to Kaimuki where we bought the house and live there so. I'm leaving Kakaako so, I'm going to go out of the group. And I quit then. Oh, that was about the late days.

MM: After the [Second World] War, eh?

UK: The Kakaako Community Association still there. But when I quit, my group, they all quit. Oh, I said, "Give it to them. We not living in Kakaako any more. Oh, I living in Kaimuki." Some went Manoa. And some of them went different section. So why we bother? Leave them alone. Let them alone. Then when we still have the language school in later day. There was a old school teacher, Iwa, who was interned with us. Came back and he didn't have his school so he ask us if he can run the school. Say, "Sure, we need somebody to run." Then, ah, let him run.

I said, "Far as the school concern, let him run. That's his business. He knows what he doing. He knows how to run." And he capable so we didn't bother him at all.

MM: Who was that?

UK: That's was Uesugi, I think it was. Uesugi, his name was. I don't go in too deep detail. You get no end to it if you go deep, you know.

GG: But what was, say, your role or your job in the Japanese school? You were a member of the parents' group or did it have a name? The group that you worked with?

UK: Yeah. My group was Kakaako Japanese Community Association.. And the other group was Kakaako and Alapai Group Association. We was two separate, you know.

GG: Were you an officer in the group?

UK: Well. Most I didn't take a president 'cause it takes too much money, too much time. I had to operate the boat shop. I had no time to spare much except nighttime. So they force me, put me in as vice-president. I never been in as president. Really I refused president-ship 'cause I have no time. I couldn't do my duty. That thing is still going until later days. And still Kakaako Community Association going on today, you know.

GG: They get together once a year and have a...

UK: Yeah. Tea party and...

GG: Yeah. What years did you first get involved with that group or how did it organize?

UK: Well, that started in that school affair. And the school case make it plain, substituted, eh. Until then, the things that we doing only once a year, you see. Get together and you know, yeah. So there wasn't very much to do but after school affair started then there was quite a bit.

GG: Did you have meetings once a week?

UK: Not regularly but sometimes every night.

GG: And did you help or have to go to court with the case?

UK: No, we didn't. I think, in fact, our group leader is a store operator. And, he was very close, my family friend. He just let that store business go. And devote his time to school affairs. He died some years ago. And he really did a good job. And his family still lives up. They didn't want [to be] mixed up in the affairs. He had sour experience, the old man. Spent lot of money and lot of time and then the childrens came. They all good. Some used to work post office.

GG: Were there other organizations in Kakaako for Japanese people to belong to?

UK: No.

GG: Maybe through church. Did you belong to a church? Way back in the old days.

UK: Oh, I suppose. Almost everybody, every one of them was belong to one or the other. See, Japanese people is follower. Your neighbors is belong to one place. Why, you like to join in too. Well, that's they think it should be. They all think they should be, as neighbors, well, it's hard to say. American people who don't think a thing like that would say it's ridiculous. It's right. You go in Ala Wai. If you think no use, why just don't bother. But Japanese is different, eh. Even you don't think it's very good, but if a neighbors come in, "I

think we should follow, you know." And that's the way, they did it. And that's the difference between American education and Japanese way teaching ideas. That's very hard to describe.

MM: What church you folks used to go? Kakaako time.

UK: Oh, church? (We have always been Buddhist so we attended Shingon Mission on Sheridan and Keeaumoku Street. But my children could go to any church except for the first born son who carries the family name. It is the usual custom for him to go to a Buddhist church and follow that religion. My daughters according to custom will follow whatever religion their husbands practice). I'm talking about when you die and make a funeral affairs, you know. And, boys, if they want to carry family religion, it's all right. If you want to change, you can. That's a free will. So change to Christian, Seventh Day Adventist. That's their privilege to do it. But first son that carries a family name, he shouldn't. We follow for generations. That's the way been doing for generations, so I guess we just follow it. 'Cause don't make any difference. You would have to take one (religion) anyhow. So, that's the way I feel about it.

MM: Yeah, but you said, you know the Japanese school, the one started by Ward Avenue. That was the Kakaako and Alapai Association.

UK: Yeah.

MM: The school had different name and what family ran that school? The Japanese school?

UK: School had a different name.

MM: No, what was the name of that one? The first one you said was Yoshino family, eh?

UK: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know the other ones. Who started? In later days, when the school affairs happens, one of Kakaako longest school was a Kishida.

Had this family still lives over there. And the other one is Masuda. Masuda.

UK's wife: Principal. Principal. Kocho sensei.

UK: Kishida is Miyaken. That's near Kyoto. And he was good in kendo. You know what kendo, right?

UK's wife: His wife still there. Honolulu.

UK: That's how our group get him...to be principal. And Wada Masuda was original one. Kakaako. Ah, Kakaako-Alapai Language School. He was a real educator from Japan. He came out of education from my Japanese

government. He comes from Hiroshima area 'cause Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, there are so many there so many immigrant came from that area. So they can afford to call this regular Japanese--or might say licensed educator by Japan government, where you got to pay pretty good salary. And first of all, you got to get permit from Japanese government. It has quite few detail, but they could afford to do it. Their numbers of immigrants were so many.

MM: When did they (Masuda and Kishida) come?

UK: When they come from Japan? That I don't know.

MM: The schools were already there when the...

UK: Yeah. They call him after school was formed. Oh, some of the schools was called by Hawaii [Big Island]. See, Hawaii, like used to be more concerned about language, education than Honolulu. Because, see, their community was more closer than Honolulu. Therefore, they could afford send for a Japanese. See, to the government for to help them. Their education program is different class, eh? Island of Hawaii this is big, but, more community.

But, this teacher themselves, they like to pick up American language or American way, study. So, lots of them went to University of Hawaii to get the degrees. Post graduate work, or something like that. Well, I guess today is not necessary those thing. But in past, by what year we talking about, it was necessary. Like you may know. Mr. Watanabe in Kapahulu area. Well, this is, I'm not sure. Don't know much about them, but I'm telling now for example. But few of 'em starting doing that way. 'Cause I know at my age, some of the fellows that was called by the [language] school, after they came, they teach couple years in mostly island of Hawaii 'cause there's the most immigrant numbers there. And they very close to language education, too. That's why they stayed one or two years. Then they all look for Honolulu. When you come to Honolulu, you get chance of starting your own [school]. You never realize that even now they watching language school and not enough to devote the whole time. They work in Japanese papers [as] reporters. They cannot do this [teaching] job, you know.

UK's wife: Japan no school wo close suru iutakoto, are iwandemoii. [They had closed Japanese school; you don't need to talk about it.]

GG: To go back, something that we forgot to ask about last time. When your father first came from Japan, did he come to work on sugar plantation or did he come to build boats?

UK: No. He came in as a boat-builder. Well, they had two type of immigrants. The plantation contract workers stay in certain length of time and go back Japan. That is one kind. And that also including immigrants had

the contract for so many years for some private concern. Like stores, incorporate. They time come, they make enough money and go back. That's one kind. Was another kind is you came out here as your own operating business. That's like my father. He says, "I like to operate the boat-building." And the United States government allowed that for--- are there class named skill labor or skill crafts? Something like that. There was a regulation. So passport kind of was different. First immigrant was green. And purple was a different. That your own operator. So my father was a purple type. And I was called by him. So get in on the purple type passport. You know how the passport and visa, the difference, though. I'm not sure, but I think Japanese or any foreign government, well, they give you passport, issue a passport for certain person, then you ask to get visa from the entry country. Like if you coming United States, you got to get the U.S. visa to be a proper way, I guess. So if Japan government issue a passport, that don't mean that you can enter. The United States government got to give you visa to enter a country. So myself was I enter country as own business operator. And that goes right through the next time I came. Japan government issue a passport my former record. So we take the record to United States Embassy or Consul in Japan then for get the visa from there. They comes of two different type, and you can stay in United States as long as you obey the law. Unless government chase you out or something. So you got the right to stay. We don't have any trouble at all. On the other hand, you cannot expect any help from the United States government even if they have to go back to Japan. You got to carry your own expenses. All that clear?

GG: Yeah. When your father came the first time, then, because he came in as independent, he had to pay his own way from Japan?

UK: That's right. That's right. And even his own passage. Like if he was out of work, for instance, and got to get living expenses, he cannot get any aid from United States government.

MM: Oh, like welfare.

UK: That's agreement that he's going to carry his own. You leave your business, out of your job, and you can't make a living, U.S. government said, "Well, you got to go back." And he has to go back. You can't pay, you pay Japan government. And then Japanese government will reimburse the United States. That was a difference. Two type of a visa or passport.

MM: Grandpa, he [UK's father] was boat-builder in Japan?

UK: Yeah.

MM: He had his own shop in Nakajima?

UK: Yeah, yeah. My father, he was apprentice to Japanese boat-builders in Japan. But usually, apprentice goes in when you just a kid, you

know. Let me see. In my days, four years of elementary school. My father's time, there was no elementary school or any regulation send your kids to school. Was up to them to---up to parents, you see. So we generally, school start counting seven years old. And four, that's 11 years you supposed to finish elementary school. Then you go to apprentice to any shop. But over there, they used to do that, they used to send the kids to apprentice before the age. What they do, those who took the apprentice, they use it [the apprentice] for family helper. Like taking care babies. They used to help carry babies, you know. I still remember. Among our friends, some of them when they apprentice, they only play outside, you know. They got to carry baby. Carry on the back, you see.

MM: How old was your father when he came 1904?

UK: Well, his family was pretty good farmer. I think we better go in a little bit deeper for how the father live. Maybe you'd like to hear that, too. Japan in generation, a century---'course samurai is top rate people. All they do is fighting. They take care the clan. You call that ...how can I describe it? Kind of hard, though. To take care the invaders, anyway. They more or less are fighting men, warriors, you might say. Then, next come to farmer. The farmer means the farmer who got a land enough to support the family and pay more or less the taxes to the clan boss who owns that area. So next come to farmer. A farmer is the highest besides the warriors. Then next is craftman, you might say. Those who make things. Then merchant is the last one. They claim merchant is that making a living out of somebody's work. 'Course, in the right meanings, is not. Merchant got back load to operate the business, but in olden days, that's they way they class the people.

So good farmer, well, that's good. Well-fixed farmer who can make their own living and pay enough taxes for their owner, they got more chances to advance. Then they're allowed to give you family name. Until then there was no such a things as family name for ordinary guys. They only just called "Jack" and "Jonah," and "John." There's no such things as used to have family name. Well, that came, late by just before Meiji. It's along the Meiji time, everybody supposed to have family name. And the gave the family. [For example] those who didn't have family name, you stay in a middle of a cultivating land area, they call them "Tanaka". You have a mountain, well, they call them "next to mountain." Have all kinds of names, you know, that they have.

UK: That's long years, but anyhow, how much do you want? Oh, well, talking about the class of people. Like our place is a small area and near the sea. In case of war or if the other group invade us, we supposed to go to...sea fighters. Like navy today. On the other hand, we used to go and [work] like for the other group, you know, to make our own living. So many islands and so many different groups, so they always were fighting. All year around, all seasons. And that's why, that's how we used to be---they used to call us in our group near the island, you know.

They good fighters, good sea fighters. In other words, good navy, you know. That's why every one of us, we know certain amount about the sea, orders, and navies, and ships and boats. And we all follow things that connected to the water. That's why old man, captain became boat builder, I think.

So I try to be a seaman myself when I grow up just before I came over here. I put in year and a half, in the seamanship. In Japan, if you be a seaman, you apply for part of union or government agent and they issue you a passbook (saying) where you start sea life and where you work, name of the ship. You got to have one year or more sea life to apply for higher class. On the other hand, there's no limit. You can go up the top man even you don't have any school education. On the other hand, if you go through school and you finish your elementary school, then you go junior school or junior high school---we talking about class minded.

MM: But Katamoto family was farmers, you said. And then your father went into....

UK: Yeah. My father's family was farmers.

MM: Never have pirates, like that by the time you were born, eh? By the time you were born they finished with pirates, yeah?

UK: I don't understand.

UK's wife:too hard place....

UK: My father, as I say, when he finished apprentice he came volunteers Onuki, from his place. This place is....about six, seven miles away by sea. Called.... I remember when I was very young he used to take me to go his mother's place. Japan is different than over here. Over here the currents run against the wind. In Japan especially the Inland Sea is only run one way six hours. And six hours the other way. So when you look this time one place, six hours later you south six hours later six miles. That's how, mile an hour the current runs away from them. When the tide change at least the boats come back, same place. If no wind. That's normal, these things. So in the summer time even us kids, we didn't think anything about going out to sea. Because you never get lost. You run so many hours, come back certain place. And even if a wind, something comes unfavorable, but somewhere near land. So if anybody look for it--we get lost--they bound to find it. That's the only thing with it, because danger during the fall; when the sea gets rough the climate or weather overcome the currents. When something like that happen to the boat--the boat is only about 16 to 20 feet; small boat, you know.

MM: Had sails?

- UK: Yeah. We get sails but kids, they don't know very much about sailing. That's why all the kids they healthy, strong. Because I came through those. I know.
- GG: When you were doing your apprenticeship in Japan, what was your job as an apprentice?
- UK: Oh, I didn't have apprentice because Baba own the shop. I took apprentice in Honolulu, in his shop. And by the time we went back in 1915 I was a good journeyman already. So we didn't have to do any "baby carrying." [Sometimes apprentices just only carried babies and didn't really learn a trade.]
- GG: So how did you learn, though, from 1915 to 1919 from your father? What kind of jobs did you do?
- UK: As I say, repairs, building, collection too. So any time I go, I go any place to work in Honolulu Floating Dry Dock I used to get top pay because I was pretty good. I was break in real strictly with my old man. And any time, any place I look for job, I get the job. With top classifications. I was very fortunate in that way. So is my brother. That later days when he went into the navy. He was a good boat builder man already. He was young. Afterwards, 1915 went back Japan. As I said the other day, Baba died and all of that. So my brother was going to enter this merchant marine. The school, there is so many school all by the seaport in that area, coast [of Japan]. The merchant marine is most numerous, backbone for.... When they take exam and enter to school they finish four years and they get third class license navigator if it's a seaman's class. There's always two class, the seaman and engineering--this mechanical engineering. For the mechanical, they get third class license, engineering license. And after that they put in---I started to say, ask for seaman. That's what way comes seaman. You have to have a year's experience after you get your seaman's life passbook. They enter that in the passbook. And after the year, you can apply for higher class. Either you want to go in higher school, you can go in or you can apply for higher license. With all that goes in, it goes in like the seaman's college, like those ships that comes in from Japan once in a while? [Training ships] Those, I think, only three in Japan. One is Yokohama--that's under the jurisdiction of Tokyo--and one in Kobe, and one in Inland Sea. I think there's only three schools there. But a lower class, one step lower, the second class is the biggest port they had. And they get the license and work another year, then if they pass the exam, they can apply for higher license. And if they pass that they get the higher license. I think got to put another year to enter the highest school or you can apply for highest license. Then you can get for engineering. Either one of them. So that was the only field that school education [lack of] don't bar you. If you can do the thing you can climb up. That's when my brother went in, and he went in a test, he passed. And when he come back he says he told the father, "I'm not going to the school."

He says, "Why? Did you fail?"

"No. Made the grade. Besides, it's a lose or a gain.

He say, "Why?"

"Because if you join in the navy, you going to put in four years duty. Drafting is only two years. But if you volunteer, you going to stay in six years. And in six years time, if you take a test you can get higher grade. And if they get higher graded you go higher schooling or training. So government pay for your training, not you fellow paying the increases [for going to the school]."

Father listens, eh. That's good reason for that, you know. Old man said, "I think it's good idea. If you like do it, go ahead do it. There no two ways; it's more your life. Boy's luck."

"So I can make my career navy."

He said the navy district is in Mainland [Japan], see. But the school is in Yokoyama. Federal government operation. So he stayed six months....what you call that, training camp. Then they take a test, pass, he went Tokyo. That's Yokohama, right off Yokohama, it's Yokosuka. You know the naval---the United States took over--it's still under United States jurisdiction yet. Every time I go, he was there all the time. So when the father went back already 1923, he was there too. And that was most dangerous area for anybody not good man. Submarine or naval man or anybody want down there. They was close to the Korean affairs, some kind of trouble. That's why he [father] hurried back. He was all right.

And all the time that I went back--several times. I went Japan, first, in 1915. I went back and I came up here 1918; 1920 and I went back 1928. Went back 1936--that was on account of my accident I went back; 1940. I went six, seven times. But he was there, called Yokosuka, so I always stopped there.

In the meantime. my uncle, he was a army artillery man. And army, he come school same area. See, mostly gun was operated on. Same school, it's the same kind of work, army and navy. And he was there, too. And very fortunately I could meet both guys every time I stopped there. Because in later days my brother was assigned with Sasebo, way down Kyushu. One of them. Because naval base. Was naval base, Yokosuka, Kure, Sasebo. Those three was the biggest naval base, used to be. But even today.

As far as navy school--was in the Kure area. Used to be called Getazuno. Eastern. One school in Japan, the highest, the one that naval officers got to come through. Those along who came up as far as the sailor and draftees, volunteers, they got to go through to be officer. And serve at least year in that school.

End two sides. You got to take the same test as your sons. One side is old men and one is just after high school. But as they get older, he can do that. He's still living. Well anyway, that's Japan, the seaman training is set up. All right. I took. I was given up by coming up there when you pass that. Five years already, or 4-1/2 years. And I didn't think that I could get passport. And if I can't get passport, I couldn't get visa anyway.

My mother didn't like seaman's life because it's too dangerous. "None of my son is going to be seaman. Seaman forgets....even your livelihood." After Mother went away, wen pass, we figured sail three or four years. She knows now. I took me a seaman's book.

UK's wife: [Says something in Japanese.]

UK: She's talking about my father's uncle. He was Inouye. He was adopted to our family. And he was good in this kendo. And then he came to see Japan police system is....hard to explain but.... this where you can come in to police through politics. And governor of the state--is got election, like. In other words it's a name from the government. They choose it for you. Their record all coming, eh, they have to go through.

But anyway, when we came to governor of our...the state, he was sent over to federal side because he was good in kendo. Then he came to be a guard of kendo. He was big promotion then. It was different name. And they know Katamoto because he was adopted. This name right, but my father did. And my father used to go in later days. After he retired he came back to our area, much living. So my wife is very proud of it. Because they worked their way through. Is not politician.

My, so many things I started. I can't stop now.

GG: I wonder, though, are you getting tired? Maybe we should stop today and come again.

UK: No. Not tired. Maybe best to take a rest. I can recall more things then, I think. You know, later day. Now I spend so much time to thinking back, eh.

GG: Well, shall we maybe take a rest then today, and come back again.

UK: If you like I can; no want make trouble.

GG: No, not at all. I don't want to stay too long one day, and then you feel like next week, "Oh, I wish they wouldn't come because they make me so tired."

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 3-32-2-78 And Tape No. 3-32A-2-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Usaburo Katamoto (UK)

January 24, 1978

Kahaluu, Oahu, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG) and Mark Matsunaga (MM)

GG: This is an interview on January 24 (1978), with Mr. Katamoto in his home in Kahaluu. The interviewer is Gael Gouveia.

MM: You know, go back to last time we had you talk about Kakaako and the Japanese groups, like that. Maybe if we can get back to 1923, the first time we ended, yeah, and go from there. (When) we left off, you folks still lived by the brewery. How long you folks lived there? You folks moved to Pauoa after that?

UK: No. From there we bought the old boat shop back then lived right on the shop, on the premises. We had the living quarter upstairs and kitchen downstairs, eh. And two (families) shared (the toolshed) at the same time.

MM: How big was the lot?

UK: Oh, it was 5,500 (square feet). But when we get the big boat, we rent the next lot, empty lot. There was a empty lot there. So we been using quite large area. Paid few dollars, you know. It wasn't so strict like today. Was very easy.

MM: That boat shop land was--you owned 'em fee simple?

UK: That's Bishop Estate's. Yeah, I think Bishop Estate. See, all that area from Kakaako Street, between South and Punchbowl, Kakaako, that's all Bishop. The Bishop Estates bought all the land back from the Hawaiians, eh. They couldn't hold it, so....now I think that place is Honolulu Foundry Works sold to...two, three years back. It was belong to Honolulu Ironworks and Company which is the mother company of Theo Davis, was a big shareholder. So they sold that to---that's why they get it. And I think they still own it.

MM: The Waikiki side of Punchbowl there, Kakaako used to run across Punchbowl? Started from where?

UK: You see, you come down to Punchbowl Street, is a curve there. You remember Niiuanu Automobile Shop was right on the corner?

MM: Right.

UK: And this Kakaako Street runs on the Halekauwila (Street) where that transportation building (is) now? Belong to the State, yeah. That short street to waterfront is straight. That's the Kakaako Street. In fact, it's only two blocks. Block and a half to the ocean. That's the Kakaako Street. And Punchbowl Street, it comes down and curves toward Kakaako Street and meet together. And we were right on the corner. Now it's all a portion of the Federal building, the new one, eh. Right on the curve.

MM: You folks moved to the boat shop what year?

UK: Yeah. Right on the corner.

MM: No, no.

UK: The old one?

MM: No. From the brewery on....

UK: Oh, that was only living up there. They had no boat shop there.

MM: What year did you folks move to the boat shop?

UK: Well, right after we bought that place, so it must be 1923.

MM: And you lived by the boat shop about what?

UK: Until....then I bought the lot in Pauoa in 1924. And my dream was when we get the kids, live away from the shop. Just forget everything. So still busy and it convenient to live right by the shop for work, you see. So we left there and that lot was left. Well, we had some trouble. 'Cause I bought the land at Pauoa, it was....what that, Mirikitani? You know Mirikitani? The doctor and the lawyer. Two brothers. Got to get two more cousins today. They were young. They're about Suki's (Mark's Uncle) age. Around, I guess pretty close to 60. Fifty-five, 60 years old. Well, his father act as a gentleman-agent for Hawaiian Trust Company. He had pretty good pull from the Hawaiian people. I guess the Hawaiian families brought him up or something like that. So he went into Hawaiian Trust and he acts like an agent and open up a tract. Well, he open up that whole Honolulu Stadium, you know. Moiliili. He been doing quite well, although he didn't treat the job good. See, he tried operate too big without the capital, you see. He has to jiggle around his funds to meet various type of payment, eh.

So he promised us, (to) give us a road, paved road and sewer. 'Course electricity was there. But he couldn't finish it. So I think it was 20 lots or something. But we got together and get lawyer, stop payment. I paid cash for it, but half of us paid cash and the others was installment plan. So those of us who paid, already paid to Hawaiian Trust and various bills, so all we can hold up is monthly payment, eh.

Then we told him, "We hold the money until you put the road and sewer in.

As soon as you get that in, we release this."

So he can't say nothing. He have to do it, live up (to) agreement. So we got that settled up. But he couldn't use his funds. And he had a little hard time, I guess. But after that, as I said, he opened the old Stadium and various tracts out there, Moiliili way. McCully was all---so he came out all right after a while. So we didn't have a house then. But a friend of mine was a real estate man.

He said, "Let me put up a house and we sell that with the house and lot."

We says, "All right. I don't think I can move up there, so you do it."

And then he put up a house....well, before he finish us....our first boy--your (MM's) Uncle Suki--was getting three, four years old and it kind of dangerous to keep in the shop, you know. So we decide to move in out there. Then we move. Instead of selling the house, we took back again. I paid him what the house cost. You know, the lot was 6,535 (square feet). I still remember that. And I paid \$1,050. Those lots 5,500 (square feet) is a flat \$1,000, you know.

(MM laughs)

UK: And then we had two bedroom house, living room. Quite a nice cottage like. For \$2,200. Just appalling you know, when you think today. But today, only house and lot cost....after the (Second World) War, I came back and I tried to get the house. I couldn't buy and I couldn't make any new houses. Hard to get the material. So I told these guys that, well, in between I figured when the kids finish high school, the biggest boy--he was born in 1922. And that son is living down here. They were born.

Then his (MM's) mother....those twins there. Those twins are still living. His mother and the aunty. When they get old enough (at the time) I thought I'll go back to Japan to see the old village estate. Well, he (my brother) had quite a bit. 'Course he lost everything after the war, when Japan lost it. I'm not living here (in Japan). My brother was living (there). But the government order is (if you) not living Japan, you got to sign over to the guys who lives in premises. And my youngest kid brother who was born in here after that, brother came 21. He was old. And he was taking care the property. So automatically went to him. And he tried to do something big to make easier, quicker money and he lost almost everything. And the brother, my next brother was in the Japanese avy. He retired from Navy when my cousin took it over. So he went back to his....we have to make a living. We got to live in there. We got no place left. So he got a hold of the rest of the place which stay under my kid brother's name, so now mostly under his name. Was the only thing was exempted, forest--timber land, like--and residence was the government didn't take it. Just left alone to homeowner. That is still under my name.

Now my biggest boy, he still lives in Japan. He works American firm, but he's living in Tokyo today, and he doesn't care to live in the country.

So is his wife and his kid. So he told me to give that house and the forest to my next brother who is seventy...no, 80. Only three years difference, so. Seventy-something.

So I says, "All right. We can also give. No hurry, maybe I go back and live there. Then after I die, I'll leave everything for you fellows (UK's son and his family), and if you want to give it to them (UK's brother), go ahead. Give to them. But as long as we live, we got to have someplace that we can live, you know, if in case go back, you see."

It's still standing there. I was supposed to go and after, oh, three or four years since I got trouble with my health and I thought when I come back, next time I sign 'em over to them. But I didn't come around to it, so is still like that.

Well, so I thought I was going to go back, and I sold this Pauoa house and lot to friend of mine. He's not my very close friend, this fellow there. They have no kids. Only couple and they live there today yet. So I called them, said, "I got no place to live and I got big family. How's you sell that house back to me?"

Said, "Sure. When you need it, go ahead. You gave us a place. Now you need it, and we don't need it, because we get only two of us. You got a big family, so, you can buy it back."

Was very nice, you know.

I said, "All right. That's nice of you. And how much you want?"

First the one that I sold, the whole thing for \$7,500, and was financed by International Mortgage. So they didn't need very much money. Was paying like rent, you know.

But, he says, it's come to money, he says, "Money is money."

I said, "Sure. Tell me what you want."

Well, he says, "Today, house like that, the 5,500 lot---"

I made the house bigger in between. I had the pretty big family. I had made another bedroom. So make it three bedroom.

And he says, "It's worth \$25,000."

"Hey, look, it's only five, six years I sold you the place for \$7,500."

GG: When did you sell it? In what year?

UK: Let me see now. Just before war broke out. Somewhere around 1939 or maybe 1940. Maybe 1941.

I says, "I think you asking little too much. Well, of course you got perfect right. You own the place now. But let me think of it. If I want to pay that much money, I might have a little some way to make the house or buy the house which really suit me." Said, "The house is little too small." Said, "I got a pretty big family."

And then his (Mark's) mother and sister and I had one more younger, sister who is living in Maryland now. Baltimore. Well, he can't force it. And he don't come down the price, too. So I get kind of a hard feeling. Mad, you know. I treat him like my own brother, and he try to get market value. Was little too much. So I figured I going to get material somehow and buy the empty lot, make my own house.

When I try to buy Manoa, that's below Woodlawn. Was pretty good. It's a big place. They opened up that place and make around dozen residence. Well, I try to dicker with that. Was kind of hard case there. So I gave that up and, well, I came across one place at Kaimuki. It's between the 16th and 13th (avenues) and I wasn't very familiar with that district. The house is still there. This is around 1920. I tried to make quick money, too. I bought one big area, Kahala Heights, on the other side of 16th Avenue, you know. There's a good big lot.

And I went in with a partner, with a friend of mine. Haole fellow. We bought the place. We thought we can swing it. I had business going pretty good. And he was working Honolulu Ironworks. He was selling clerk for this machinery. We used to know each other pretty good. Around my age. And he had lived in Kaimuki area so he know the place. He's died now. His wife was living there but I haven't seen her for years now. But anyway, we bought that place. And we figured we can sell enough place to take care balance monthly payment. So the real estate man thinks, too. So we took the place. I paid probably up to \$2,200. Was big money then, you see. If you just figure today's value, it's about 10 times, or more.

So I says, "I'll make that initial payment."

So he says, "I can take care part of these monthly payments if in case we delay selling or rent the place." He had a few places up Kuliouou. He says, well, when we split up, he says, he can give me that big lot, Kuliouou.

And, "No, you keep that. You need it." So I didn't take it. I should have taken, though. But anyway, I used to know that around Kaimuki places. And that place where I bought the house, old house, right next to the place where we bought the first, you see, couple of years ago. So, I know the place, and I think it was nice place. I think I made debt all the time I move. I had that good chance to make good size money, but I was too eager to make money. (Laughs) Small investment, try to make big. And never works.

(GG laughs)

UK: Well, that place was "A" zone. About 10,000 square feet only allowed to

one house. In order to make 20,000, you got to have two houses. You got to have....over 10,000. Then you can divide with that lot in two, you see, so you can make two houses. That was a class "A" zone. Residential. Now just below the road--that name of the road Claudine Avenue--is B class. That's 50 by 100. That's 5,000. But most Kaimuki area, it's a little bigger than 50,000. Sixty, 65 by 100, you see; 6,000, 6,500. So they'll have a little bit greens, yard all around the house instead of a one side. If only 50, you got to give only five feet from the boundary which ordinance call for. Was really cooped up, you see. So, I bought the place and we lived there.

And what I was talking to? Oh, I see. How I move up from Kakaako to Pauoa then to Kaimuki. But before this happened, we moved into Pauoa house for a couple of years. Now let me see. I moved in there 1924. Then....1928, I went back Japan. I brought the kid brothers up and we still was living in Pauoa. Of course, their mother wasn't born there. Only the biggest girl was going to Hongwanji, that Fort Gakuen Japanese language school by Fort Street. The (Hongwanji) church is there. Right across Pali Highway. From there to Pauoa house is not too far, you know. The kids can walk down. They used to walk down. Then I started getting busy on my business again. Then I was working Tuna Packers on a commission basis. That's on Kewalo. And it was hard to get back and forth from Pauoa to Kewalo.

Oh! Then my friend who owns that Coral Garden Motors down there, we were brought up together. We used to live right across the street. We lived on the Kakaako Street on Ewa side. This here lived on Waikiki side. From the day I came from Japan, I know this fellow, see. We still are friend. He's laid up. He's retired. He had a stroke here about pretty close 10 years ago. He retired, and his kids are running the business. Coral Garden Motors. He really was a auto dealer. By trade he is a blacksmith. But when they opened up Schofield Barracks, army tried to put in improvement. He works for the army, and works at various type of job running steamer roll, putting the road in and all those sorts of things. Then, when that thing over, instead of going back to blacksmith job, he went into Schuman Carriage Company. As an auto salesman. And Schuman Carriage Company owned by old man Schuman and his son, Scotty Schuman. You know that athlete? He belong on a football team and all that? (Laughs) Well, we were all playmates. And that's why he used to help us out quite a bit.

So he works with Schuman Carriage Company as a auto salesman for years. He's pretty active. He's been working on Kamuri, that's Ritz today on Fort Street. He used to be, well, more or less, capitalist, or financier with haoles. Was very few Japanese get mixed up with haoles then. They didn't have enough capital. That's why he was....he originally opened up the Waipahu Motor. That's agent for Ford, you know. Those old Fords, (Model) T Ford came out...1920....no, wait a minute now. Old Ford came out before I go back to Japan, 1915. So 1916 or 1917, I think the Ford, their Model start come out. They used to have a taxi, you know. George Ikeda bin form the taxis. I still remember one of my friend been driving taxi, and he brought back the cab and we used to make fun out of it. (laughs) Riding around, you know.

(GG and MM laugh)

UK: Then, so, Blackie, who is, he work with Kaunui as a Schuman agent, Waipahu Motor, you see. See, they form the company, Waipahu Motor, but it actually was Schuman's capital. And so, they always tied up, but Blackie, he still had cars in Kaneohe. And he bought that Coral Garden Motors site then, you see. And he had the big place down the beach, next to Wilcox and they go right in between. They still own that place yet. It's a good place. Beautiful place. Waterfront.

Oh, he says, "I want to go to Kaneohe, so, you take over Kakaako place." Kakaako place, where we had the store originally; Schuman leased from Bishop Estate. And Kakaako, around then Bishop Estate and Ward Estate, was two of them own the land. All we had to do it, is some of them few Hawaiians and Portuguese had it. Fee simple land. But mostly was lease land.

He says, "You take over the store." We had little store, you know. He had. His wife used to run it. And I worked in Kewalo close by.

He said, "You take over the store. We going Kaneohe."

I says, "All right." And I took over the store, and stay in Kakaako in the weekdays. We go back Pauoa weekend. We been operating that for some time. Then my wife got all the kids born, two, three girls. There's four girls from the start, and two boys. The whole family was there, like that. So was too much to live in Kakaako together. We only had one cottage, two bedroom. There was bedroom on the side of the store, too. But anyway, we sleep weekdays in Kakaako and go back to Pauoa weekends. You know, the misery for my wife, I think, she too much. And she got tied down. When she gave birth, she go to hospital.

Those days, all the Japanese used to stay home and hire mid-wife, and give birth alone. That's why his mother, I still remember. I came out, and the lady that were working for me called me up, she says, "Your wife gave birth and only one more coming." I says, "Two coming?" She says, "Yeah." I held it back, and I waited. I waited to some time before next one came out. But anyway, it's a lot of story like.

GG: What was the name of the store?

UK: That was used to be Yalagala store. That is my friend's name. And I (had) no name in that store, mind. But see, I didn't want to be stuck in the store. Yeah. We make separate, you see. To keep the record clear. Easier to keep them. My tax man was Chinese guy, you see. It's best to do that, 'cause (if) you get under your name, is going to be all mixed up and hard to keep the books.

GG: Where was the little store?

UK: Now let's see how it is today. There used to be a T.H. Davies lumberyard on the town side of Ward Street. You remember?

GG: I don't remember, but from the maps I think I've seen.

UK: Yeah. You see that Ward Street right down to Kewalo Wharf, Fisherman's Wharf. Then town side of that Ward Street there was a lumberyard. The whole block was a lumberyard. A big warehouse in front today of the Ala Moana. Opposite Ala Moana. Where they keep their merchandise. And, ah, well, Davies wen change that plan and made the cash and carrier store in that area, and all sort of things. Especially change. But, anyway, one big warehouse right in the front of the Ala Moana road, upper side, you know. Right off the warehouse, there was a 30-foot driveway. Big driveway go into lumberyard. And right off the driveway, townside, was the store. Used to be Schuman's Stable. Schuman Carriage used to carry quite a lot horses and mules. That's their original business before they go into auto business. Oh, now let me see, what the famous store? He said Schuman's partner was....I forget the name of that fellow now. If I recall, I couldn't remember now. Who been taking care beef stock, like horse and mules. In later days, he brought the elephant baby. The thing grew up and he can't take care, so he gave to zoo, you know. Waikiki Zoo.

(MM laughs)

GG: He had the elephant right there at the stables?

UK: Yeah.

(GG laughs)

UK: The stable was big, you know. One whole block from Ala Moana, as I say the driveway, driveway to Cooke Street or Koula. I think it's Cooke. Was whole block. In those days then, land don't mean anything to them, you see. They just lease a portion of it. See, they want to lease them all. We give you couple dollars a month, and we lease your land. See, Bishop Trust or Ward Trust says go ahead. At least, they can keep the land clean. And that's the way they going. So, yeah, that's the way the store was. And it was too hard for wife and she's got---get tired, you know. And my family doctor--he died now. Was friend of mine who came from Japan, just like me. The father call him up, was born in Japan. And he went Mainland. He got medical. Then he came to be a doctor. And he was pretty good at that.

MM: Dr. Takaki?

UK: No, like Kimura. Then he said the best for my wife (was to) live in Kakaako. He said Pauoa it's valley-like, you see. There's cold at night, and hot in the afternoon. He said not too good. So I think for her, or for all the kids and his (MM's) mother, and the sister used to have asthma. So he says Kakaako air is plenty of dust, but still good for the health. The sea breeze and all of that. So he recommend to live in Kakaako. So I let the kid's brother, the one who was born in here, I went back 1928. Brought him back. He was going school and help me after school. I let him live in there. Our house. And we used to go up back once in a while, you know

to spend the weekend. And it works out good couple of years. So actually we live in that place quite a while. Yeah. After the war I came back from internship and I had to hassle (with) the house so I sold that house later on. So I had to buy Kaimuki. That's when we went in Kaimuki.

MM: Oh. Grandma had the store till about....

UK's wife: 1931. 1931. And 25 year I made, 1955 quit,

GG: And what did she carry in the store? Just groceries?

UK: Groceries.

UK's wife: Ice cream.

UK: All kind of things.

UK's wife: Soda water. Japanese medicine.

UK: They had store like that. I still got couple of showcases there.

UK's wife: Just like Davies lumberyard no next...

MM: That's the bank now, eh? Over there.

UK's wife: Yeah. I think so.

UK: A bank there. I don't know. I haven't been there for years.

MM: About what? What? Hundred yards from Ward Avenue, eh? Maybe 200 yards.

UK: In back of what?

MM: No, no. The store was about 200 yards from Ward Avenue.

UK: Yeah, yeah.

UK's wife: Camp was right over 30 yards...

UK: There was a Filipino camp. After the Schuman quit animal carriage and draying business, and went in the auto dealer, they didn't need a place. So he bought cheap lumber from the Mainland. By shipload he bought them, in fact. And, he built the rent houses. Some duplex. Was 10. Ten and ten, I think 30 Filipino guys used to live in there. There's used to call 'em "Filipino camp."

GG: So was it mostly Filipinos who bought in the store, then?

UK's wife: Hawaiian. Any kind, Portuguese. Any kind,

UK: There is Japanese and Filipinos, but Japanese is getting more steady

income, then, you see. Fishing came in good. So was mostly Filipino.

GG: The Filipinos that lived in Filipino camp there, what kind of work did they do?

UK: Oh, various type. All kinds of work. Filipino, lot went fishing, some labor. You know, general labor like lumberyard workers, and mostly lumberyard worker, yeah? And working Davies lumberyard, or Lewers and Cooke lumberyard.

GG: And what about in the store. as far as language. How did they communicate with each other?

UK: In broken English. Pidgin. Hawaiian. Hawaiian-English, you know. My wife can understand, so. I cannot, but she could.

GG: She had to learn, huh? (Laughs)

UK: They don't know. Why, they just go in there and say, "How much is this?" If maybe \$2, he give \$2. Take the merchandise out. (Laughs)

GG: Did you carry meat and vegetables?

UK: No, no. Just dry groceries.

MM: The Filipino guys were mostly single, then, eh? Not families, or anything?

UK: No, not necessarily. Had family. Had a few Hawaiians in there, too.

MM: So, that whole block that, around you folks was what, just houses like that?

UK: Yeah.

GG: Did the haoles live throughout Kakaako, or mostly one place, too?

UK: No. There was very few haoles, I'd say the last time. The Portuguese been living up, above Queen Street. Near the Queen Street. Yeah. And mostly Hawaiians. And Japanese and Filipinos.

MM: When you folks were at the store, you're working Tuna Packers, eh?

UK: Yeah.

GG: Did you give up the boatyard, or you still had the boat place, too?

UK: When I gave up the boat shop, let me see now. I moved on to Tuna Packers 1924 or 1925. We'll say 1924. Then, I was working in town. Did I say I tried to be a stockbroker? Well, about two years I recall. 1929, when that big crash came, I was out the stock market. I didn't like that, you know, play margin on the stock market. Take too much chances. Oh, I thought I had these shares mainly in stock. But played stocks when I was

young. Leave that in there. That good company. They pays the dividends. But when stock market crash, it wasn't paid up. They start to call--we used to buy on six per cent margin, I think it was. They start call more margin. I can't afford. So I sold out,

I say, "Sell 'em all, and make it whatever leftover, make it pay up so I don't have to worry about it, margin business." And that there, and when I get out, I made couple thousand dollars during three years time. But I originally put in thousand dollars my own money. When I get out I think I lost a thousand. Oh, well, that's all in the game. Now what we went up to?

GG: Why did you get out of the boat business?

UK: Well, it hard work, you know. You couldn't get skill labor, or so they call a journeyman, or craftsman when you need them. There's only limited [number of jobs]. And when you get, when you take the contract to build their boat, you have to live up (to it) anyway. So you have to do it mostly yourself. Sometimes, I would work till two, three hours a night. I mean, night. And got to work the following day. Just to meet the, you know, job. And really, it's a hard work, and it didn't pay. And, as I says, the Japanese fishing business, we didn't have too much money. 'Cause all they have to do is, they make a little money, they got to make a living, pay living expenses and whatever leftover, they invest it something else. More or less shareholder, what going to pay for the boat. And all that time I got to carry that account. You see? So, it really didn't pay for your business standpoint. And you can't buy no insurance. No insurance company take the (boat) insurance, and if they do it's such a high rate, you know, we can't afford. So all the risk was us, the builders used to take. That's why it really didn't pay to struggle. That's how these workmen, they ask me how you making.

I says, "It's hardly any."

He says, "You quit the business, and you come downtown work with me. I think you got more potential there."

Oh, he had big ideas. Of course, he carry through. At the same time Chinn Ho, you know, capitalist now. (Laughs) He just finish St. Louis College, and he came in office. He start work the same time I start in town. So we still friend today. (Laughs) But I had no school education, or book-keeping, or accounting, or anything like that. I'm not fit for the office work anyway. Oh, I fitting as the salesclerk. And in order to sell stocks you got to dress up. You got to do lot of talking, which I don't like it, too. You know, sometimes you give them false information, you think it's going to be all right, but it don't have to be that way. Not I intended, but, you know how it is. I didn't feel that, that job suit me. That's why I get out of it.

Then, all this danger of my wife in Kakaako and Pauoa, too. As I say, my wife get sick and doctor recommend better stay in Kakaako. I just got to

follow his word. In the meantime, I get sick. This leg here been giving me trouble long time, too. Since way back time, think 1936. But it wasn't bad enough that I could not work, you see. I could work, and still it's now, and then, comes out and I suffer. By this time, when I get old, I couldn't resist any more, I guess. And this couple years, just lately I'm been laid up. But I didn't worry much about. Then you see, Tuna Packers changed hand. They sold the whole company to Chris Holmes. You know Chris Holmes, when he came from Mainland. He had so much money. Really his mother had. And got to have something for him to play around. And he made that big house in Waikiki. You know where's the Chris Holmes' place?

GG: I don't think so.

UK: Next to the, how'd you describe that? Aquarium.

GG: Oh!

UK: Townside of the aquarium. And all that. He spent lot of money. There's no question about that. His agent was it, A&B (Alexander & Baldwin)? The Alan Davis was his, even representing most of the business transaction for Chris Holmes. Those fellows are big time. I couldn't blame him, but, you know, I been mixed up with the pineapple company. And, Inter-island Steamship Company through a dry dock. That's all waterfront work. Chris Holmes bought the Tuna Packers. That's Hawaiian Pineapple Company. That's Lumber ya, Castle & Cooke, isn't it? Yeah. Castle & Cooke. And Alan Davis and White--then president of Hawaiian Pineapple Company--is a cousin. So they all, you know, they mixed up. They the root there. So when Chris Holmes bought the Tuna Packers, Henry White is a president of the Dole company, Hawaiian Pineapple Company. And his brother, Clarence White, was treasurer, or something. But Alan Davis took him over to Tuna Packers; put him as manager for Tuna Packers. And I used to know Mr. White quite a lot. I used to do almost most of the work for Hawaiian Pine. Hawaiian Pine used to own Lanai. So, the company owns a boat for the Lanai manager family. You know, private yacht, like where they use that from Honolulu to Lanai, or when they go out fishing trip week end. When I used to do all that work (it was) on my own time, or Hawaiian Tuna Packers' time. So I always been mixed up with these bunches. But right after I get laid up, my leg get worse, they lay me off.

They say, "We don't need your service any more."

Well, I was kind of disappointed 'cause these guys been using me all this time, and says now while I'm laid up in the hospital. they says, "You fired." Why, that not right. Well, no sense making a kick. And I don't want to work for them anyway.

So I says, "Okay."

No, I think they paid me, I forgot the transaction. Something like six month's pay.

Well I says, "All right. If you don't need me, I won't work for you, that's all."

White didn't say that himself. He used to use his right-hand man. Crow, his name was. He was a small fellow, Russian. Good engineer. And he says, "I'm just relating a message from the boss."

I says, "I know. I know. Even if you don't fire me I'll quit anyway if I can't work."

So after I came back, the dry dock boys, the boat shop boys (workers) been finishing all the job that I start. They come to hospital bedside and ask me what to do, and how to do it. I used to give them instruction. It's all right. I figure that's what...back order from that company. But, the job I took from I got to finish the job for them. We finish all the job. Then, I was release from hospital.

And, I says, "Now, I'm all washed up with you fellows."

So all the job is finish, the boys can take care. And those workers that operating dry dock, work in boat shop, I had two gang.

And I told these boys, "Hey, don't feel bad because I quit the job. You carry on. It seems to be only one of you going be the boss of the job and take good care. 'Cause I don't worry 'cause I can work any place in the waterfront.

So, I left the company. I was out of job for, oh, just a little while. A month or so, I think. I still had that carry full day's work but Inter-Island, the old floating dry dock stuff get busy just before the war (World War II) broke out, you see. So, navy job and engineer's job and all kinds. So, then they ask me to work for them.

I say, "All right. I need the job."

So, I started work for them; I used to work half a day.

"Eh, oh, I'm tired. I go home."

They paid me for when I was at work, you know. That was very nice. See, all the foremans and the superintendents, I know them well. And they want give me a job because they need my service. Well, I gave what I can and when I think I overdo, I quit, and rest then.

GG: What was your job for them?

UK: Well, it varies, yeah. Building and repair ships, boats. I was pretty good for all kinds of things. Even, I can do part of the machinist. I didn't suffer any job. In later--we jump again, but--you know, then unions start organize. There was a union there but that's for only the shippers' union. There was no union for general workers in floating dry dock or steamship company. See, floating dry dock or steamship company. See.

floating dry dock is owned by United Steamship Company. Later, they came into Hawaiian Air Lines. When they quit service, they devote all their business to airlines, eh?

The first time American came into Hawaii, they used to use a seaplane, you know, with the floats on it. And they based in the Pearl Harbor, by peninsula. Well, I think that--in the later days, I was intended to pick up by FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] because I was mixed up then, see. And I was sent by the company to see, that how they operate that plane. See, they landed there. There was no airfield, eh? They going use Pearl Harbor water to take off. And all those thing was a record on me. The FBI start thinking, eh. Anyway, went on like that for, oh, for sometime, for couple of months. Then, I got all my health back (feeling better), I can do almost any work. Then this Navy yard job started come in, you see. The torpedo chaser, what they call "a mosquito fleet", you know. Small boat, 40, 50 feet, and what they call it "crash boat", or something. Ah, used to belong to the Air Force. Well, that's my regular job is a small boat, eh. The boats I been taking care of, big ships, too. Oh, I can work for most any line of work connected to ships, or boats. And, when they (employers) built the new small-size boat, they left up to me. Assigned couple of helpers, you know. And nobody bother me, and let me do it my way. Want material, would go in office, "I want so and so," and they give me that.

So, in fact, I think I made more money than when I was at Tuna Packers. Oh, when that fellows (Tuna Packers) laid me off, didn't hurt me much. You know, in the meantime, when they got a big job comes out, you know, from Mainland, well, Tuna Packers' boys was forming a building part. They come ask me my opinion, how it going to be. Oh, I tell them what should be looking. If my own boys, I brought them up from after school, you see, apprentice-like.

MM: Mostly Japanese, the boat builders?

UK: Yeah, all Japanese. You can say all Japanese because other nationality can't stand that hard work. And not like youngsters of today. They demand so much work, but they don't carry on their duties. (Laughs) You know what I mean. They know what they want. But they don't know what they supposed to do for their right. Well, those things didn't hurt old timers like me. It isn't right. We give something, they got to pay it back, in some way. But younger son now, they take all they can, and try to get away least. No. I can tell you all about this kid (MM).

(GG laughs)

UK: So they [younger men on waterfront] used to call me pretty tough old man. Oh, they didn't argue with me. Because I had nothing to lose. If they come and argue with me, they're the loser. I try to help them. I give all what I got. But if they don't want to take it, all right, it's up to them. Don't take it. Oh, I was way along that way. All in waterfronts. Nobody come and argue with me, 'cause I say this, when I say yes, or just keep mouth shut. Oh I had a pretty good life in my days. Anyway, that's

just before the war broke out.

And when the leaders start organize the pineapple company, they got to bring the pineapple from Lanai to Honolulu to can them, otherwise they lose their crop. But, they got no man to...see, there was only two tugboat used to belong to Inter-Island which they, they had the scow, you know, like barge, like today. Well, they offered one tug; oil tug and one laid up, as soon as season is off. [To repair, overhaul] and, about a month before season open, they start repeat, and overhaul all the equipment on deck. The pineapple company get tugboat because they afraid the union is affiliated. And they got no men to fix 'em. So, the pineapple company who runs a waterfront business, I used to know 'em for years.

He says, "You come with the boat."

I says, "I don't think I can do that because I'm a member of the dry dock union."

"Oh," he says, "we'll fix it up. We'll make it so that you won't be in trouble."

Oh, they fix 'em up all right and I told the union that all of us cannot be out of job. Like myself I got a family I got to look after.

"But, some of you fellas too. So, I tell you what I do, I give you, what's this, \$10 a week, or something for union," [Contributed money to the union fund while working]

MM: Oh, that's kind of plenty, eh?

UK: For my standing up on the what you call that? You work around the picket line. So, you can take care that. You can give your pay to somebody. "Take my place for stand on the picket line." But they agree. They say, "Sure. We got to eat." So there was no trouble, so I get out the dry dock, and go to pineapple company to fix the ship. And I been doing that oh, for three weeks. For almost a month anyway. And when job is almost finished, then ship get the gang again, you see. Ship always get one and two, what they call, one below gang and one on-deck gang. Deck gang is the sailors, and below means engineers, works in the machinery. Well, makes fireman. Oh, one of them was a steam engine. What you call "turbine system." They got the firemen, wiper, and all sort of things there. Strictly union organized.

GG: Do you remember what year this was, and what union?

UK: That was the last year when war broke out. War broke out about 1941, eh?

MM: Yeah.

UK: It was in 1941. 'Cause when I fix the ship, and pass that season, then they went army or air force cargo to south sea island. And, the war broke out.

GG: Was that International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, or which union? Do you remember? Which union was it?

UK: Well, now that you get me, I don't know which one is that.

GG: The longshoremen's union? Was that what it was?

UK: No. Who belongs the cannery is not longshoreman...

GG: Oh, that's right.

UK: That's...

GG: Different union.

UK: Yeah. That's under state's or territory. It was territory then. Jurisdiction. But longshoremen was all federal, you see. And we connected with a ship. That's all longshoremen. See, in the meantime I got hurt on the job. Bust my leg. Use the same leg. This a tough leg, you know. (Laughs) Then I been on crutch--I got hurt on November. Then I came work--came home for Christmas. Doctor sent me back. My family doctor didn't come into that. In those days we didn't know the rights too much,

UK's wife: 1938, eh?

UK: After, I still remember what doctor was. Doctor Judd. You know Governor Judd? His brother was a doctor. That's pineapple company doctor. Oh, he was the doctor the day I got hurt. I was on the smaller boat, and the big tug was tied alongside. And the part of the machinery that break off did fly up, was a 100 feet. That small attachment that broke off, Before that, it hit over here, in between. I could've been killed, you know. Easily. But, lucky just hit inside and flew out. I had a heavy shoe. But when the crew, the deck crew came down back to the boat--it's only about 50 feet away--try get my shoes off, they said they couldn't get 'em off. So I told them cut the shoe off. I was all right. I was still conscious. They took the shoes off and carry me in the (train) car and hurry into a dispensary in the company. That (car) goes through the lower gate. There was a fellow from company in the train, it used to run into pier. So there was a roadway. When we get into the clinic why, the leg was about oh, less than one gallon size. Swell up, you know. Pains.

Well, I was still conscious and the nurse said, "I can't do anything to it. You take him up the hospital." She said, "We call up a doctor from here."

So when they took me up to Queen's Hospital, Doctor Judd was there already. "Oh," he said, "we can't do nothing. We just dig it out. All split up." Oil and paint clothes, you know, working clothes--they ripped that off and put me up on the bed.

Doctor got hold of the nurse what to do, and he say, "We can't do much. You got to stay under gas. It's going to pain. But there's nothing much

you can do about it. Just put you in sleep." But he says he doesn't want to use too much drug for start. "So, if you can't stand it, you just tell the nurse, and we see how you going to come out couple of hours later."

So I told them call my wife. He said he call my wife. I tell him, telephone to my friend's house, and they will bring my wife up. So they telephone to my friend, and friend brought wife up there, office. First, she didn't know what has happened.

I says, "Don't worry." I says, "I won't die yet."

And my wife told my friend, "Look after them [the lads]."

So we still like that [close]. But, I really suffered. But in those days, you know, doctor was good, the nurse was good. Everything was really perfect. And, because you got your friend, doctor...call him if you want to. And he came. What he say (is) best, let Dr. Judd take care, because he's company doctor. And, it's nothing to worry. He know what to do. Oh, he got his own patients so, once in a while he visit me. My friend, family doctor, you know.

There was, everything went fine. I went like that for about a week. I couldn't do my business on bed. I can't use that. You know, how it feels. Well, pretty happy, too, I think. So I used to call the nurse to go in toilet. But, later, when no sense calling nurse, I can take care myself. So, I used to do it like that for, oh, about five days later. And, one night I went in. I finish business. Then, I feel kind of chilly, you know. Gee, I wonder why. I look the floor, was nothing but blood. The whole floor was blood. So, I don't know how I get back to the bed. There was no bell system like today. Today you get the bell, or light system in the toilet, too. But, in those days, you got to go back to bed, or get that extension. No, they didn't have extension to my side. So I struggled back to the bed, and call the nurse, you know. When she came in, she was surprised. Ah, she yells, I think. Japanese and Filipino, orderly was--it was nighttime--on duty. And she call two of them, and clean me up and put me asleep, but chilly, you know. See, was so cold, I told her it's chilly. I guess she said, "Doctor will be here soon. We got to wait for the doctor."

And Dr. Judd came and well, so he finally did.

He says, "That got to be come off. You don't feel the pain after." He says, "I can't puncture that. I didn't want to puncture that unless it come out by itself." So it did. So, he said, "Nothing to worry."

He was right. And after that I was pretty easy, you know. Everyday, after breakfast, he order me up to the penthouse. Take a sunbath. (Laughs) And, when I woke up, orderly comes up with drinks. Either milk or fruit juice, or something, you know. And before lunch, they put me down for lunch. And give me afternoon walk.

Oh, he says, "Afternoon, you feel strong, I can order car from the pineapple company. You can take a spin. You go picture, downtown movie, it's all right. And you want to go home, take a rest, it's all right. You come back before supper, and have your dinner here." Ah, that suit me fine.

GG: Like a vacation.

UK: All those orderlies and workers. There's too much work for them. They got to put me in a wheelchair. And the elevator. Put me in a car downstairs. And they got to do the same thing when I get back. They wasn't so happy, but it's doctor's order. They got to carry. You know, those days was good. Even they didn't like it, they don't squawk like today's worker, you know. Today, if you do a thing like that, they walk away from you. Even say, a couple months ago, I bawl one nurse out. She just walk away from me.

Say, "If you don't like my way, do your way. What can I do? I can't do nothing."

I try to take up with head nurse and she say, "You got to play the game with her."

That's what she say. And, if you don't want to, if you still want your way, why, you got to get out from the hospital. Then you go the other hospital, the same thing again. So I know now, that I not go. If anything, let them do as they wish.

GG: Did the company pay for all of this?

UK: Yeah.

GG: Since you were hurt on the job?

UK: Yeah, yeah.

GG: And this was what? 1936?

UK: Yeah. They paid me not full (wages). I think they paid me a 60 per cent of earnings. Something like that.

GG: They took care of all the hospitals you were in?

UK: Yeah, yeah. And, my boss, at the cannery company, must've earned--you only get 60 per cent, you losing out. So you come out to work. This was later days. When I released from hospital, go back to stay at home.

He say, "You report to work, then just stay on job. When you get tired, you go in the office, and sit down. You can lay down if you want to. As long as you report to work, you get whole day's pay. Whole time pay. So, I think you better do that."

And, I did that way, too. Oh, they were very nice as far as that goes. So that was November I get hurt. Then April, couple of my friends, four or five guys must've taken a trip to Japan.

So, he says, "We take care you, let's go back and you take hot spring. That's going to heal you up quick."

It really do, you know. Good. Oh, I tell the doctor about that.

He say, "Yeah, you sure you can rely the boys?"

I say, "Yeah, I can. They'll do all they can for me."

And when I get back to Tokyo, my bigger son, he's there already, see. He got stuck in the war. Ah, let me see. I sent him back. I sent to Japan, when he was high school. He enter high school. Yeah, in June, when the first semester is over. Then I sent him and his sister, the elder one, the first daughter of mine. I sent both of them to Japan school. The president of the school pass here through Mainland trip, you know. And the younger school teachers. I thought was a good school. So, (Japanese school) take over (UK's son's education) for even one year make a lot of difference. I agree with them. Not only me. It's couple of us. My very close friend, and one more friend. Four families. And one of them took three childrens, all they had, and he went back with the children. And my house is two, boy and girl. The other friends is that one boy. We all sent to that school.

And when they enter the school, my kid sister, who was born in there, the mother took back. They were just still baby. She grew up and married to a guy and was in the village, but they came in Tokyo. They working. When he was working the stock market... The man [my friend] was pretty well schooled. And he says he didn't like the school.

He says, "The school's purpose is just making money."

It wasn't though. That school person used to live just---couple of years ago he died. The school is still going. In the area, but, at that time, the man (school person) was only looking for school. I mean, money.

So he (UK's brother-in-law) he says, "I'll look after myself. And get the kids out to Tokyo, and put them in the city, big school."

Well, I can't argue with him. I'm here, they're there. They'll do the best they can anyway.

So I say, "Go ahead. Suit yourself." So they took two of my kids to Tokyo, and put them in the good school. For one year anyway. And the other friend's son, he's way back in the country. But they send them up to Tokyo. And he entered the not same school, but a town school anyway. So my biggest daughter been staying Tokyo one whole year until the following year summer. Went in school and after school...

END OF TAPE NO. 3-32-2-78

SIDE ONE: Tape No. 3-32A-2-78

MM: Who gave you the name (Chappy) like that?

UK: Well, I guess just name 'em my own, among ourself, eh. That go any kind of name.

GG: Then when they gave nicknames they gave you English nicknames?

UK: Well, I used to think, they call me, they used to call me "John." And, I come from Japan, so they used to call me "Chappy." Then all kinds of name, you know.

GG: Was friendly name, though.

UK: Yeah. Among the friends. And that's spread out, you see. It was pretty wide area I had friends. Those guys in Molokai, in police force, then Haleiwa way, Kaneohe. I had friends all over the country. I mean, territory.

Now, where did I go? Oh, we talking about the kids' school. Yeah. The following year, the same year, 1928, I got hurt. I send them back in 1928. Oh, I send the kids back in June, and the following year, April, I took a trip with a friend of mine. But the leg. So when I reach Yokohama, my sister and the husband came to the hotel in Tokyo to take me home. See, I couldn't walk. I couldn't even use the crutch that time.

GG: Was this 1929? Or was it 1937?

UK: No, 1930. 1937 or 1938. I send them back in 1937, June. I went 1938, April. Then I went Tokyo with sister in their home. Just about two-hour ride on the trip. On the streetcar like. You know, train. And I think used to cost us 10 yen, \$5 American money by taxi from Yokohama to Tokyo. Once I took the train, and once I took the taxi. Oh, I been doing that not more than once. Couple times. Then my next brother was in Yokosuka. It's close by Yokohama. Just about half an hour train ride. And, after I went back Tokyo, they took (me to) the family doctor. The family doctor recommend us a good surgery. Bone specialist in Tokyo. And they recommend me to a hot spring, instead of medicine.

They say, "You don't need medicine. Medicine don't work much. Hot spring does more. More for this type of a case."

I go what they call Ikewara. It's about two hours train ride from Tokyo. So, weekend.

MM: Weekend?

UK: Weekend, kids used to come. I stayed, I think, about a month.

MM: That long?

UK: Yeah.

MM: Oh, what, auntie came back with you?

UK: No. She always there. She still living in Japan yet.

MM: What about, Grandpa, you know Kakaako. When you came as a boy, was---you came, what, 1910, yeah? What was it like, you know, then? And then, how did it change? More people started moving in, like that? When you first came, must not have been that crowded, eh?

UK: No. It wasn't crowded like later days. But there was enough Japanese used to live there. They used to be big block, that's Magoon Block. That's a tremendous big block was, you know. From Cooke Street to our street 'cause the whole block was one block. One building. And smaller block here and there, all around from, you see that's where that tax office building now.

MM: Mililani Street.

UK: Punchbowl...

MM: Punchbowl and Mililani.

UK: Mililani, yeah. They all downtown section now.

MM: The waterfront side was---well, Kewalo was one pond, eh?

UK: Yeah, Kewalo was a...shallow water when low tide. The small tide's about knee-high. Big tide about two feet, now. Two, three feet.

MM: And when did Tuna Packers start, from when?

UK: Tuna Packers moved out to present plant, either 1925, 1926.

MM: Where were they before that?

UK: It's on Coral Street. Cooke Street's, let's see. One block Waikiki side there's another street, yeah. Running up and down. That's a Coral Street. That's Diamond Head side. Waikiki side of the Coral Street used to be Tuna Packers. In later days, they came to be sake-shoyu brewery. Yeah. I think building's still there, eh?

MM: So they used to have to take the boats out, what, up by the boat's stuff, or something?

UK: Well, yes, later, when I move the shop from Kakaako Street to Kewalo, that's where I move the shop. I move to Kewalo, then I build the boat right in front the water, waterfront. And put them (boats) on the carriage, which is operate by radio. Portable radio. That's dry dock business. We used to call 'em "Kewalo Marine Radio Works" instead of a dry dock. That's why

I moved into Kewalo. Instead of carrying long ways, eh. You spend six months and lots of money, and carry that carriage. It take too much chances. If you go Kewalo, you can put 'em on the carriage, put 'em on the rail and just shoot 'em in the water. Yeah. That one reason why I move.

MM: Oh, oh, oh. You know, there was a fisherman's association. Did you deal much with them? In later days of aku fishing?

UK: Well, fisherman's association always there, in a big or small scale. But, it wasn't so strong, eh.

MM: Oh, oh. Not everybody belonged to it?

UK: Oh, more or less they connected. But there hardly any systematic operation, yeah.

MM: Oh. When you used to have your (boat shop) there were a lot of independent fishermen? In the beginning part?

UK: Well, yes. There was one type, one group is aku fishermen. Which one is aim for aku only. There's another type. It's ahi. That's tuna, the big tuna. That one class. And there's another class, deep sea fishing what they call. They fish off the bottom of the ocean. That's one type. And, there's smaller boat operation. Mostly 30 feet long. One-man affairs. One or two men. And these fellows, so they call deep sea fishermen, two men, goes as far as Molokai and Lanai, and possibly Maui, around that area. Those bigger boat, which they come to six, seven men crew, they used to go off Kauai. The, what, Necker Shores was more...south to, close to Japan. Midway side. Nikka. All kind of a island there. Very shallow water, there's a fish there, 'cause smaller fish, or some big grows in shallow water. And all the bigger fish go after that. And bigger tuna and sharks go after the bigger fish. (Laughs)

MM: Did you ever go out with them? With the fishermen?

UK: No, I didn't have a chance to go out, long trip. I should've done though, while I was young.

MM: You went out on the small boats, though?

UK: Oh, yeah. Everytime we fix the boat, we make a trial run. Try the engine and try the power plant and the boat. And we used to take them out Diamond Head, or farther out. A five, six-hour run anyway. We would trial-run. And we throw. Sometimes we catch a fish, you know. Throw in line.

MM: The boats that you used to make before you moved to Kewalo, was what kind boats?

UK: All kinds. From 10 foot skiff to 65 feet long. See, the regulation, customers' regulation what they used to call. Not over 60 feet. I think

it's 60 feet. This, you got to have a licensed operator. Especially, when you carry passengers or freight for hire. But if you are the owner of the boat, and carry your own freight, no passenger carry, why, you don't have to have. You only need this operator license. They only strict if, when they come to regular license crews, they have to have three-shifts in a day. It's all kinds of a regulations that you got to follow. Like customs rules. That's how we couldn't make any bigger boat even you go far away. Sixty feet is not too long. But we try to beat the law as much as we can, too. You know, when they call 60 feet, is head of the main plank to end of the back line, is a regulation. And, overhang, they don't count. So we used to have more overhang. That didn't go too far.

(MM and GG laugh)

UK: Just a few feet. But I don't know who it was. Was very understanding, custom inspectors. Head of the inspector,

He says, "As long as you don't carry your freight for hire, you carry your own freight, you don't have to have license operator. So you can make any size boat as you wish. But, the minute you carry freight for hire, then you got to be under license. Under license means any man not work more than eight hours a day. Then it requires three shift. It means, it three shift on deck, and three shift below deck. The engineering or power plant side. So you'll have to have a six crew."

That small operating business can't meet the end. Oh, that was out of the question. But anyway, so they gave us the invitation to not need carrier license operator. They always give the boat, bigger, take chances. Then, all the boat got to be registered to federal water by custom house number. The smaller boat has territorial state, or harbor boat number. They used to carry two numbers.

MM: The coast guard didn't do (this). Was it the enforcement agency then, in those days?

UK: Yeah, coast guard works under public affairs. That's federal.

GG: How long did it take to build a boat? From start to finish?

UK: Well, depends how rush you are. If you rush, even big boat, within six months time we used to finish 'em. And if not in rush, we can just put the men on one. We have to be able to spare. Some cases, two years, three years.

GG: And did you have a standard design, or the customer tells you how they want it?

UK: No, in fact, anything big we supposed to submit the plan before we start the boat. But, ah, they own those strictly from the fishing boat. They

build the boat first, and then we notify after we finish 'em. 'Cause goods is right there. And they figured we make a boat strong enough to stay in the gaff. Oh, which it did. It's very seldom we lost a boat. More so, I remember two, or three boat got lost on the trip. But that in the long period of time. Anything can happen. Even any ocean liner. So, they pretty easy on that. I used to notify by even telephone. They used to send the inspector, you know. They measure, eh? This boat is so-and-so capacity, tonnage, you know, under certain class. And they tell us what to do.

So everything was going very smooth, and they was very easy on us. That way, help the territory or state's fishing business, too. Brought up too strictly, we won't grow anything. They very understandable. I think that's the best part of the United States government. If Japan, all government workers, they all by rules, and you got to follow the rule. But, United States, no. They up to the head inspector and they very understandable. Let us go as far as they can, as their capacity. And they very nice, they really works good. I think that way you can build up your country. Faster and solid, instead of going by the reading regulations, who says if you only go by regulation you can hardly move. Isn't it? What you call this if is against the governor's regulations? You can't do nothing.

GG: How many boat builders were in town?

UK: In those days, always used to be one, two, three, or four builders. Four individual shops. Anything more than four, not enough job. So, one got to give up. They used to come up, goes out (of business), come out, goes out, you know. But, at the most, four.

GG: Were they all in Kakaako?

UK: Well, some was in elsewhere by Pier 15 side. But most in Kakaako. There was three, or you can say three in Kakaako, anyway. See, one individual, see, start anyplace. All they do is to one box for the tools, you know. And they start to build a boat. That's the nice part of it. You start to lay the keel. Oh, it's too hot. Better put the roof up.

(MM laughs)

UK: And put a few posts up, and for the roof shade, you know.

Builder inspector comes, say, "What you doing?"

"Oh, I just put the shade up just while I building this boat. When this boat built over we tear down."

Say, "Oh, let it go." But nowadays, you can't do that. The town's getting too big. I used to be in money with the boy helps lot a times. But we struggle and get out of it.

File, I says, "Oh, we file so much. Well, we cannot pay the fine. So we better wait until I make some money."

(MM and GG laugh)

UK: It really was good, you know, in the old days.

GG: I think maybe we should stop today, and maybe, I wonder if next week...

UK: It's that time already?

MM: Yeah.

GG: Afraid so. (Laughs)

UK: Yeah, we didn't make much progress, eh?

MM: Oh, yeah, plenty.

END OF INTERVIEW

TAPE NO. 3-34-3-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Usaburo Katamoto (UK)

Kahaluu, Oahu, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG) and Mark Matsunaga (MM)

GG: This is the third interview with Mr. Katamoto in his home in Kahaluu. The date is January 31, 1978, and the interviewer is Gael Gouveia.

MM: Well, why don't we talk about the war [World War II]. Where were you when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

UK: We were at Kakaako, eh?

MM: Yeah. Remember what you were doing that day? It was Sunday.

UK: You mean Pearl Harbor day?

MK: Kokusai gekijo. [MK=Mrs. Katamoto]

UK: It was Sunday, December 8.

MK: Seven.

UK: Morning time. Oh yeah, Japan time, yeah. We were supposed to get first aid graduation at that Aala Theater.

MK: Kokusai gekijo, Daddy, that was. Was asoko itte minna itte*.

UK: Now wait a minute. Is that....the other side....International Theater. Wait, I don't know. I think there was another theater by Aala Street. (It was Kokusai [International] Theater behind Toyo, which still stands.) We were up looking at that....at market. Aala Market. So it must be on Aala Street. I don't think it's International Theater. It was Honolulu Theater or Aala Theater. But anyway, that was the whole Honolulu community, Japanese community, friends there. We bin taking first aid lesson for about a month, I think. We were just there. Then we finish the course. The instructor was a Japanese doctor; was under the position of....he's at--can't be police station. It cannot be FBI. Anyway, he was sort of a government official.

GG: That put on the first aid classes?

UK: Yeah. Then we finish the course and all the community from---some of them from we used to call 'em 'Water Town' then. It's Hickam Air Base now. We used to call 'em, that place, 'Water Town.' Air Base was there

*Translation: They go over there, everybody goes.

already. I strictly remember, see, that morning, we were supposed to be there 8 o'clock. And from Kakaako district, we was living by the store then. Word came down and told me, he says, "We are in trouble. Don't know what country, but we're attacked." And war start, begun now, so maybe they call off that ceremony today.

"Well," I says, "we don't get any telephone call or anything, so we go anyhow until we get notified from headquarter." Then I finish the breakfast, and I told the boys, "You go first. I take the last bunch," rounded-up and I wen take 'em go. So I sent that first group out first and I took the last group. Was late. I getting ready. So I went to the theater. Then don't start the thing--graduate ceremony, because, you know, they are plenty fires on; they say that enemy plane. We didn't know. Well, we felt that the Japanese bin attack but we didn't want to say, you know.

And somebody says, "No, that's the U. S. Army is taking a target practice." So I don't say anything. They say, "We don't think that enemy attack. That's a practice." Well, it didn't look like. It's more real stuff, you know. Then a plane came from Diamond Head side of town and over the city. It came right over the Aala Market which is nearby---we just in front like that. We can see, you know.

And some says, "Eh, that plane don't look like United States plane 'cause the body is shorter than United States one. A different shape." We can see that Japanese flag mark on the body. So you know it's got to be attack.

Then from the police station, lieutenant came over and they said to me, "Eh, you get everybody in the theater. Let nobody go out from there. You stay around here until further notice. And we don't know what's going to happen." So everybody went in the theater, they stuck there and can't go home.

As I said, "Some of them got to go back to Puuloa way." But they cannot go, they cannot pass the street, especially waterfront.

They says, "Those come from Kakaako area, you stay until the last because they all shut that road. The road is shut off now. So if you do go, I will tell you which way to go."

Anyway, he says, "Don't move." So we got to stay there.

Then about, oh, 9 o'clock come, 10 o'clock come, and they says, police honcho say, "You can go now, but we escort you." So, we take the first group out. And we had three carloads there, think it was, boys that's from our area.

So I told them I'd be the last gang. "And all you fellas take everybody," I say, "whatever you can't take, I'll take it up."

GG: How did people act in the theater? Were they frightened?

UK: Well, they stay calm, just following the order. They never get panicky, you know.

MM: This was all Japanese people?

UK: Yeah. Was only Japanese community up there. See, to take the first aid course, see, it's not for the young people, mostly for the elders and those who don't speak English. You got to take the course in Japanese. So it's got to be Japanese group. And everybody goes except just a handful of those folks cannot get any transportation there. And I was the last bunch, anyhow. The police say that everything seems to be all right. But before that, they say there was a bomb. Japanese came, dropped the bomb by Kukui and now it's somewhere around the Diamond Head side of Nuuanu Street. There was no Pali Highway then, you see. Used to be only Nuuanu and Fort (streets). There was a big Monkeypod tree right on the street. Just like the Banyan tree on Keeaumoku. It's right in the middle of the road. We used to go around the tree, to pass by. Well, somewhere around there, he said Japanese plane dropped a bomb there. Some fella got hurt and got killed. Well, they say that, this is rumor. We never see. We just get the word from our side and we relay to the group.

And some of them say, "Now McCully district is on fire." That's another one [rumor]. Well, anyway....police officers running around and they can't lead us, 'tho they took the early bunch out. But they think it's all right because everything is kind of calm down, and you can go. We try anyway. So we take Vineyard Street and go to Punchbowl, passing in front of Queen Street, and go down Kakaako area. Well, they said, they was ordered to take that route, you see. That's the most safety route. Oh. (Laughs) When we got home, I only had one guy with me. They all had transportation. There was another guy--was helping me to send these fellas home--was left and myself.

"Well," I says, "we all right. We can take any route, now there's only two of us." Well, anyway, when we get home, just about 12 o'clock. Then, here comes a police detective.

He said, "Where you were yesterday?" While I was having lunch over there with family. And then talking to the kid and the wife what has happened in the theater. They came and they want check up where I was last night.

Well, the night before, Saturday night, there was a wedding party in Waikiki. And I was invited. And usually, the party last long time, you know, those days. Twelve, 1 o'clock. But that night there was, something was funny, didn't feel good. And among our friends, say, "Let's go home. I don't feel good." And why don't go second party?

I says, "No, another time. I don't feel good so I'm going home anyway." Then we had three, four friends went together.

"He going home, we going, too."

"So, all right. Suit yourself, but anyway, I won't go to second party." Well, I came home about 12 o'clock. I told my....the detective take that down....I was on a party. We came home and we sleep early for a change. They all know, you see, Japanese around my age then, they always used to have a good time, they have a party among themselves, you know. Second party, third party. Twelve, one o'clock, and dead drunk, you know.

(Laughter)

UK: You know, those days, there wasn't so many traffic. And we think we had too much, we used to pull up side of the road and take a nap. Then you kind of sober up a little. Then we come home. We never had any trouble. And so my story true; they didn't bother me after that.

Anyway, "You fellas ought to behave and don't make too much trouble, now." Can't make no party, anyway. And all the aliens cannot go out after dark, I think after 6 o'clock. After sun set, you know. It's a new regulation circulating around. So we cannot go out, we cooped up the home.

But he says, "You fellas we need helping in the first aid course." We took the first aid course, got to go headquarter. And they put the headquarter up....Pohukaina School. You know, that's right on the Pohukaina area. And that was....you know, I think Governor Burns was working at police station.

MM: He was a captain.

UK: I think, you know, in. Governor Burns. Yeah. Then he was assigned to Kakaako. Kakaako's kind of rough district, you see. And my friend, doctor, was the head of our instruction group. So he was on duty. One doctor and police officers, and the rest of us got to stay in headquarters at the school. I told him, "I got to go back because my house (behind the Kakaako store) is only wife and the kids. There's no Japanese neighbor over there." (Was industrial area already; the house was adjacent to the old stock yard.) [Refer to UK interview No. 2] You know, they were one block away. See there's another boat builder. He's still living today. He was living in the same area, but one block out, you see. He was right on Koula Street.

GG: What was his name?

UK: Funai. His son still running a boat shop at Sand Island. He was here the other day. We still are friends. Anyway, he was there, so I told them, "I got to go back." 'Course they all know where I live, you see.

"Well, you think you can make it?"

I say, "Sure, I'm all right. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Nothing that frighten me. And I know all the boys. All the Kakaako boys that were going high school, around eight (of them). They standing guard on

every street, eh. That is not only Japanese (but) Portuguese, the Hawaiians; all nationalities, Chinese.

GG: Did they let the Japanese stand guard, too?

UK: Well, no. They just keep 'em out of the trouble. And if a guy's not obeying the law, why, they haul 'em in. But they had loaded gun, you know. Because it's a war, so they think they are on top the world, eh, because nobody can touch them. If you go ahead, they shoot.

They ordered, "Anyone's up and you tell them 'stop,' and they don't stop, shoot 'em." They was---orders then, you see. So, they at headquarter all worried about me.

And, "You better not go." But when I think about the family, I think I better go.

Well, anyway, "We won't stop you."

So I told them, the police officers, "I know all the boys and they know me pretty well. And they know I won't do any harm or spy business like that, so I really think I'm safe unless they shoot me on sight."

Well, they say, "Oh, I don't think they shoot you. They tell you stop, anyway. If you don't, why, they might shoot you, so don't do anything.... when they say, 'Halt,' you just stop."

Say, "Okay." (Chuckles) So, I left Pohukaina School, come out Coral Street, go to Cooke Street down on the Pohukaina Street, taking across, and I come to Koula Street. And right on the corner was the Funai Boat Shop. And in the corner was empty lot--corner of Waihihina. So when I came to over there, you can see some light, you see. There's black-out, so there's no light. Well, I got home safely, anyway. Then I was talking to my wife, there's no light allowed, you know. They blackout and they'd blind the windows, you know, but still the light leaks.

And those patrols, if they see any light, they call your attention, "You get light leaking. Turn the light off." They said, "Don't smoke openly. If you going smoke, then hide 'cause any plane flying up there, they can see your light." So we got to talk in the dark. So we cannot go sleep, you know. Especially female---well, my wife was kind of frightened, 'cause my bigger son, the one in Japan now, he was caught in Japan. The one lives over here, that's the only boy. (The rest of them four girls. One was married, was living at Wahiawa. And three girls and one boy was living those days in Kakaako.) And he doesn't come back. He go out play.

So we been telling him, "You got to watch out. You might get shot."

He said, "Ah, they won't shoot me. They know me." You never can tell....and we was kind of worried and tried to keep him home, but

youngsters, they won't stay home. So, let him go. Oh yeah.

The following day on the 8th, when the detective come and check me up, they asked my son, too, "Where you was," and all that question. He told him where he was.

He (detective) said, "You better not. Don't go out at night, especially Japanese. You know, at night, they might shoot you guys, for no reason, and you can't make any case out it. It's the Martial Law now and taking orders from Army and we get nothing to say about that. Lock you fellas up."

GG: How did they get the word out to the people? Did they go house to house or did they tell you and you tell neighbors?

UK: Yeah. Relay the word: I tell you and you tell the next guy and all that. A small relay. It worked pretty smooth. They left us all the regulation for us read. First day, they collect all weapons around the house, guns, sword. And the knives, anything over eight inch, and shortwave radio. Then when they started issuing the orders, people get scared, eh. Especially Japanese. They don't want to take any chances even, the ordinary radios they want to give up.

Say, "We don't want to get in trouble." So we had quite a bit of work, get the name down, put the tag on the list, then they haul them in to Pohukaina School. There was no school, anyway. The school was shut off some time. At that time, I was working at the Honolulu Floating Drydock which is the dry dock right below the Kakaako Street. It was taken over by engineer, army. All the harbor affairs took over by engineers. So we got to take orders from engineers. And the local police, local government get nothing to say. There's Martial Law. And those who was working on the dry dock, I think about half or five or six Japanese was working, non-citizen and non-union. I told the captain who was in charge, "Officer, now I'm a Japanese and we're running a community association and try to help the community, anyway, So I want to absent from work."

He said, "Nothing doing. We need all the longshoremen, especially like you fellas trained men, got to be on the job. We get more job than we can take care so you can't take off." He says, "I'll fix a first aid station, a community station from this outfit so you don't need to worry."

Then the Pohukaina School was a ordinary elementary school. I still remember the principal was Mr. Lewis, and he was handle that building. I think that's the way the local police set up that, you know, the outfit. So the engineer from the engineers' office went over Pohukaina headquarters, told them, "So and so is not going to be there 'cause we need him this side." Well, they cannot say nothing.

So I told, "I can't go back. I can't stay out after 6 o'clock, after sundown."

Well, they said, "All right. You can go home; 6 o'clock come, doesn't matter what you doing. You can tell the foreman that you going home."

And I says, "I got to go barbershop. So I going take afternoon off."

Says, "No, no. You go to barbershop and we pay you full time, and you come back after pau." (Chuckles) "We need even half an hour work." It's got to be 'cause it was quite a bit of damage at Pearl Harbor. They send all the small boat to our place. Even a submarine was assigned to our dry dock to be repaired there. They got some was stationed at Japanese Sea, around there, they all got to repair. They had it up in the dry dock. And still what they say road check. There's no siren. No good. There and you see those different people work on the dry dock and the bunch working, some of who are Navy Yard men came from Pearl Harbor....

GG: To help out?

UK: Yeah, yeah. For work, for finish the job. You got to finish 'em right away. They got to put back on duty. And they get all the men they can get any way. So I don't go up on the submarine. I told my foreman, "Well, I don't want to get mixed up with the big gang. I'm not too young any more. And I'd rather you stay away from them guys. You got plenty smaller job which I take care. With smaller group."

"Yeah, I don't blame you." He always give me a little power, too, you know. He give me a small job, small boat, so I stay on shop most of the time. I work in the shop and dry dock, you know, submarine was just like you see in the movies, you see. Monkey comes out from the tree. Same thing. Jesus, the people! They get out, says to all of us, "When you get siren, everybody get off the job and try to get in the bomb shelter." They had bomb shelter across street. Now it's part of a Pier 2, down there. Upper side of the immigration station. That's by that lumberyard, store lumbers and things, you know. And the captain says that, "Why don't you folks go in the shelter?"

"There's no room. There's no sense go in overcrowd it. We're going to get hurt anyway. If they drop the bomb, why, you just got to take it. We're going to die sooner or later." So we stay up in the shop. It's not any more danger than bomb shelters. Bomb shelter is small and packed so much. If anything happen outside, you going to suffocate anyhow. So they won't argue 'cause those army officers, they stay out. They never run into bomb shelters, 'cause there wasn't enough. Before that, they provide for it but not in a big scale. They were very small.

In our place, too, they say, "You fellas make a shelter and dig a hole. Foxhole like and just the family, four or five, we stay in there instead of stay in open." That was orders, and we made ours, too. And we finished it together. Kakaako is the most dangerous area. "We better get someplace. In the case order come, we got a place to go. We cannot rely on that friend's house. Well, let's borrow any houses that we can rent, you know, empty house." So we three, four guys get together, we rent one house, upper Manoa. Now is you know where is that Chinese graveyard?

GG: Yeah.

UK: Below that. There was right in that farm area, there's a farm house. It's a little cottage big enough to 10, 15 guys live in it. So we took cooking utensils and some canned goods, rice. So anytime the evacuate order comes, we can go over there and stay in there. We keep the car in condition so we can go.

GG: Did you build a shelter at that house, too? Underneath the....

UK: No, no. There was no....you might say there wasn't. We didn't know enough about bomb drop, if the enemy place drop the bomb along that area, until a bomb fell in Japan. Then people really take a notice it's dangerous. Until then, well, your tough luck if you got strike from the bomb. That's the way they all felt, I guess. Just get away from the crowded area and it was instructions anytime enemies try land, it's going to be landing in Kakaako area--would be the easiest place to land in the leeward side. So they all told us Kakaako was dangerous area anyhow.

So they give us a advance order that "if evacuate sirens come, you guys the first guys to leave, 'cause if you don't leave early, the street congested. You never be able to get away."

We said, "All right." All you need is just take little things. Maybe clothes. We got enough kaukau for a week or 10 days, anyway. We didn't have to worry about that. All we have to do is get away from that area. Well, that's the way it was set up, so we didn't have any evacuation order after all. But we felt it might come out any time. But months had passed, well, in between, they said about a week later there was-- the enemy dropped a bomb in the Tantalus area. All kinds of rumors, you know, spread around. Had big money. Too bad. I was there [internment camp] five years. That was worse.

GG: This was the week after the initial attack?

UK: Yeah. You can't tell whether it's enemy plane or our plane. We heard the sound and thought we attacked again. In most cases, our own patrol plane. That was an experience. You cannot describe in any way. You got to experience by yourself. I can't find the right words to say. Anyway, the weeks passed and everything was calm down, now.

Then engineers say, "I think we return to the company and the old union. Finish whatever job you got. Pearl Harbor Navy Yard can take care the rest." So right after the dry dock was returned to the company, pineapple company was getting ready the next season. The pineapple got to come from Lanai. They don't have tug boat. They had the contract, Inter-Island Steamship Company. Had to transport pineapple from Lanai to Honolulu. But after the war (started), everything was thrown off schedule. So that's the reason pineapple company took. They was going to operate two tug and barge like that to transport pineapple Lanai to Honolulu. Libby McNeil and Libby was owner and Hawaiian Pine, Dole was Lanai. I think Hawaiian Pine was owned by brothers which was a Dillingham outfit. They had a big barge and more

tugs. I think they can take care of it that way. Hawaiian Pine just tied up with the Inter-Island Drydock Company. And I think engineer in charge of Hawaiian Pine is old friend of mine. His name is Palmer, Frank C. Palmer. His son is maybe six, seven years younger than me. He been working the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. He must be working around that area anyway. I think he still is. Anyway, we got to come and work again. Had to go work. Well, had to work anyhow. There was a union already set up. I told the union official I give them \$10 a week. Ah, 95 cents is top pay for shipwrights. And 40 hours a week... means, I guess dollar...40 hours, is \$40 a week.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

UK: I says, "I give you fellas \$10 a week but I cannot go picket line. See, I work every day so I can't stand on the picket."

He said, "Yeah, we'll have to provide enough work for members. It's all right." We start...I think it's something like that. We have understanding I started work for them.

MM: Grandpa.

UK: Hm?

MM: Tired?

UK: No, I just thinking what it was tune up the boat, tug. Was before the war break out. The tug was sent to South Sea islands for cargo--had some goods for the South Sea islands. Two tugs was sent out. And when war broke out, a week later, one tug came back here, with empty barge. And one--they all unload the goods and was on the way back when the war broke out.

This barge captain says, "I got look after crew's plight, so we left the barge in front of the island. Christmas Island." And he came back alone empty. And we didn't accuse him.

I says, "That's all right. I think you did the right thing. We can go and get the barge later on." And that one come back. One of the captains died about 10 years ago. The other one still alive. Both got away with it and they went get the empty barge after a couple month's rest. Yeah, that's what it was.

Then after war break out, like I say, I don't want to work here mostly because my family. All the regulation after that things came back normal. There's special pass we had to wear. They put 'em on there. And FBI and federal inspector--checkers come in and visit me. And again I told them, "I don't want to work. My wife is handling small store." They never let us quit any business then--if you been in a business you got to stay in the business. They went back. I was

assigned to Island Company, run their plant.

And that's when two FBI came to the plant and said, "I want you to come with me."

I said, "All right." I was expecting them to call me. I said, "Let me change clothes. I get dirty clothes, dirt, and everything."

He says, "No. You don't have to." After they ask me a few questions. "I think you better go." I went like that. I went FBI office, civilian transportation unit. You know, downtown--Bishop and above Halekauwila. Went up there.

My wife was there. She told me, "They came and pick me up."

I say, "Oh." I said when they were through with my wife, "Take her home."

He say, "You don't have to wait." After my wife went home they start check on me.

Had all that papers. They say, "Where you been hiding?"

I say, "No, I wasn't hiding."

"You should be in here long time ago."

And I told him I work at the dry dock down there adjoin to immigration station. I says, "My house is up here. Why don't you let me go see them?"

But he says, "No." Two, three nights I got to stay in the immigration station. And they said they thought they going to release me. I thought so too, but they didn't. I was sent to Sand Island across the harbor, then shipped up the Mainland.

GG: But did they tell you why they were keeping you? Where did they keep you?

UK: No. In meantime Mr. Palmer came out, says, "I'm worried."

I says, "I know."

He said, "I think they release you. There's not enough evidence to lock you up." Ordinarily, yes. They cannot. It's up to the army during war time. Then I was sent to Sand Island. Stay there about, oh, 10 to 14 days.

GG: Were you allowed to see your wife at all during this time?

UK: No, nobody was allowed.

GG: Did you have any word from your family? Did you know what was happening?

UK: No. I knew I leaving that day. I learn much later she learn from officer that, "your husband went to Mainland." So, few clothes I don't send. And all that, you know. That they won't tell you until last minute. I don't know why. I don't think they sending you. They won't tell you until last minute. So going away tomorrow. So we let you know. That's all. I had on the boat overcoat from the wife, two pair socks. Overcoat, I think. Yeah.

MM: They ship you folks to Los Angeles in big train?

UK: Hm?

MM: When you went up Mainland.

UK: Oh, we spent 10 days.

GG: What did you folks do during the day while you were at Sand Island waiting to know what was happening?

UK: Just wandering around the area. Within the barbed wire. And we was confined in the tent in Sand Island.

GG: Some of your friends were in there with you?

UK: Yeah.

END OF SIDE TWO.

TAPE NO. 3-36-4-78
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Usaburo Katamoto (UK)

Kahaluu, Oahu, Hawaii

February 14, 1978

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG) and Mark Matsunaga (MM)

GG: This is an interview with Mr. Katamoto in his home in Kahaluu. The date is February 14 and the interviewer is Gael Gouveia.

UK: Where did we stop last time?

MM: Ah, during the war. [MM=grandson]

GG: You were talking about being on that boat. Being taken to California. And I wondered during, you know, the war. And I wonder if we could back up just a bit and maybe you could tell how your brother was involved with the Japanese Navy and maybe what kinds of problems there were for you here in Hawaii.

UK: Ah, yeah. Let's see now. Well, according to the record that they had in the FBI office, you know, they just showed me what they holding me for. And just glanced at it, you know. My brother was in the Japanese Navy and just pre-war you see, Japanese tanker used to come in quite a bit. And everytime they come, why, his friends come and visit us. That's why got to go and entertain them. And they go to parties, you know, and congregate at the Japanese Consul. That sort of things were held by FBI office. And they had quite a bit papers typed all out, you know. They say, "We holding you for this." Well, there's nothing we can say about it. Yeah, that's why they....

GG: How did you feel inside when they told you this and showed you the records?

UK: Well, just everybody else been (getting pulled in), you see, previous. I called up, so I wasn't any excited. Was kinda expecting it, you know. The first group was hold up from the same morning. As soon as the attack, that afternoon they start pulled in already. So, around 150, I guess. I'm not sure. From there on, every day, you know, mostly every week, they got so many pulled in. So when they got to me, says, "Where you been hiding?"

I say, "I wasn't hiding any place. I just been working." And I tried-- my wife used to run small store at those days then. I wanted to quit business. But, they won't let us.

They say, "Anything, you been running you got to carry on the same thing."

GG: Because of Martial Law? Was that why you had to....

UK: Yeah, I guess it was. They didn't want anything unusual, I mean, they just want to carry on this pre-war stuff, I guess. And they put out new regulations almost every day for running small business or alien residents--residential area. So, they kept me quite busy. And, I wanted not to work. I was working for Honolulu Drydock. That's belong to Inter-Island Steamship Company. And, as soon as war broke off, the Martial Law start and U. S. Engineers took charge of harbor. And they was under Engineer Department.

They said, "No, you can't absent from work. We need workers, worse way. Well, you got to work."

I says, "Aliens, non-citizens cannot go out after sundown. 'Cause after 6 o'clock."

They say, "That's all right, you can go home 6 o'clock." Just like that.

I say, "I like to go to barbershop."

They say, "You go barbershop in the afternoon working hours. Take off, take off, and it's all right. And come back work again." No, they don't let me rest, you know. They keep me working all that time. So, I told them. I wasn't hiding anything. What they used to call that now? Community Headquarter was in Pohukaina School. And, on the charge of the school principal; I think his name was Mr. Lewis.

And he says--the engineer says, "We call up the headquarter and let them understand. So, you just do what you can for them. But, you cannot be absent from this--your regular duty. You got to come work." And they called up, you know. And they said, well, whenever I need--they need me, I mean the community, why, they let me know. They call me up until the thing's over. You know, couple hours a day. They call my engineers. There was no trouble. They worked very smoothly. So, I told them that they been working. They understood that too, see. There's no trouble.

GG: What kind of regulations or policies were they changing every day, for, like the store?

UK: Well, various things like any small stores carry fireworks--firecrackers and things like that, got to be surrendered. And bring up to the community Headquarter. And radios, short-wave, and firearms. There was so many things. Knife, so many inch and longer, they got to do that too. It was pretty strict, you know.

GG: Were you carrying any of those things in the store at the time?

UK: No, that doesn't mean, in the store. It's fireworks like that in the store, but every residential individual houses too, you see.

GG: Did you sell fireworks in the store, though, prior to this?

UK: Well, you know, was left over from previous year.

GG: So now, when you were on the boat and they're taking you to California, what happened when you arrived in California?

UK: We head to San Fran--Oakland (where) the quarantine island, what is that? What you call that island? Just off Oakland. Don't you call that Angel Island?

GG: Yes, that's right. Angel Island.

UK: Yeah, we was there one week, 10 days. I remember it was pretty cold in the morning, you know. Cooler than here now. They had this steam been going on in the room. But, they treat us very nice there too. Our spokesman, leader was a Southern California University graduate. A man from Hilo. And his classmate was in charge in that camp, I think he was commander or something. So, there everything went very smooth, they feed us good. They dress very nicely. I think about 10 days we stayed there. And they don't tell us where we go. But, they ship us up to Sacramento and goes (through) Nevada, past Nevada and we reach to Texas. Fort Sam Houston. We stayed there about two weeks, 10 days. Then send us to army prisoner camp. Cold, you know. Now I can't recall that place now. I know, it's right in my mouth. I can't say it. It's in southern part of Texas, near New Mexico anyway. And it still was under army, you see. Then we stayed there about two weeks and then we moved to Santa Fe.

GG: Do you know why they moved you so many places?

UK: No, I don't know. I don't know why, what the policy was. They made big camp mostly for German and Italy gang, I guess. But, they hadn't been used and then (not) much prisoners sent the U. S. anyway, I think. That's what I understood. Then they just, don't let us sit in one place. You know, move around all the time. Then after we move to Santa Fe then we stayed there until end of the war.

GG: I see. The different places you were, did they have tents or, what did you folks stay in?

UK: No, they had Army barracks. You know, those 20 by 50 feet or something, that long barracks.

GG: And how did they decide who stayed in which barracks, or do you know?

UK: Yes. As soon as we reached new camp, they organize some kind of a system, you know. And they let us elect our own spokesman within the camp and divide into so many barracks. I think it was 50 in a barrack or something like that. Elect barrack captain. And they have a meeting everyday, because nothing else to do.

GG: So, at these meetings, did they assign you to like work parties, or you just....

UK: Oh, volunteer. They said you got to keep within the camp clean. That's our regulation, connected to our daily living. And outside of camp, they want so much men if you want work--volunteer like. And pay us 10 cents an hour. But, it's usually quite a bit of guys wants to go out the fence anyway. Double wire fence, you know, and guard here and there. And you feel more free if you get out of the fence.

GG: And then, what kind of work did they do?

UK: Well, they just clean up around the outside of the fence, you know. It's most, even Santa Fe or even the other places previous to Santa Fe, they most like desert land, yeah. There's no big trees but those desert plants that grow about that big. I still got some of the wood and we go out and we pick up stones and that kind of a old wood, you know. It takes so many years to get two feet high.

GG: Was it like manzanita? Manzanita? Hard wood?

UK: Yeah, hard wood, yeah.

GG: Yeah.

UK: It's very hard. We used to make pen holder and all kinds of things without...we had good, the home-made tools, you know. They don't allow you so many tools. We take a broken knife, broken steel and we just spend our time and sharpen it and make it cuttable. You be surprised how they can make, you know. It's everyday work, you see.

GG: Mostly to keep you busy and to keep your mind occupied?

UK: Yeah, occupied your minds...and you just...later days, they allow you--they give you, I guess Red Cross donate that things. Baseball and golf outfit, you know. And, we used to do that quite a bit. And, like music amusement (and) that Japanese chess. There's pretty smart guys was in there, too, you see. And, we keep ourselves busy if we are willing to. There's enough to do, to learn. 'Cause the only duty we have, as I say, keep within the fence clean. Especially latrine.

GG: You folks didn't have to do the cooking, then, or laundry?

UK: No, we got to do the cooking and laundry within the camp. That's connected our own living, you see. And we get volunteer from among the members.

GG: Was there a, like a community kitchen and then so many from each barracks go cook?

UK: That's right, that's right. They get...there's always volunteer cook and those necessary workmans.

GG: And did you have the kind of food that you were accustomed to or what kinds of....

UK: Well....

GG: Did they have rice?

UK: The regulation was...yeah, every once in a while they were sent to go up to the headquarter which office is just adjoin. Not in the wire fence, but, it just outside. Only the liaison office is in the--within the wire fence. But, a representative goes out to the office and see the department head--ask for necessity things. And their system was very good. I was working---see, one of my very close doctor, the one used to be in Kakaako, was with us. And, until we went into Santa Fe, there were mostly Mainland people. From Hawaii there was first and second group was sent but they was (up) the north. Up the north and not down south. In later days, they all came into Santa Fe, but we was the first with Santa Fe. Santa Fe used to be the World War First German prisoner camp, I understand. There was old cottage was there, you know. But, now was World War Second, newer barracks came in. And, even no winter, Santa Fe get cold, you know. Ah, let's see. Down Alberquerque and those lower part was hot--was very hot. But Santa Fe's town is what....

GG: Like a mile high, I think.

UK: Yes. Seven thousand, five hundred. It's over 7,000 anyways. It's pretty high. And we have snow by November and that snow stayed till the next February. So, you can imagine how cold it is.

GG: Right. Did they provide you warm enough clothes?

UK: Oh, yeah. They give you the army clothes used to be.

MM: How, grandpa, how did they treat you, like the army guys in charge of the camp?

UK: Very nice. As I say, I was going to go into that. Then, the doctor friend of mine told me somebody got to--well, since we got so many Hawaii, guys from Hawaii, we better make somebody take charge in the hospital. They ask you go, take a patient out to the---there was about dozen doctors among Japanese doctors. So they give you enough medicine, emergency cases, first aid and assign nurses--one nurse, anyway, 24 hours. There's always a nurse on the job.

GG: That was a military female nurse?

UK: Yeah.

GG: And they had one building in the camp set up like hospital?

UK: Uh huh. The whole section was hospital area, and if they need hospitalized--people need to be confined, why, we allowed to let 'em stay in there. And, of course Japanese doctor take care. But, many cases--the complicate cases you got to take 'em out that Santa Fe town. Got general hospital there. Just like Saint Francis, eh, that....

GG: Catholic.

UK: Yeah. The hospital--we used to go hospital--how we used to call? That name was, title was....Now wait. Those things I can't remember the small things, you know, since I got this health trouble few years, eh. I was the head of the camp hospital, anyway. So, you have to go up there almost every day up to the main office to ask for certain type of supplies. And of course we can ask nurse but they want more than nurse give you, then we have to go direct to the head. All those things and they're keeping....Was a soft hospital area. Workers--the doctors and the patients was separate than ordinary big ones. They used to give us better stuff because he was sick man. So, on those jobs I have to go out main office almost every day. And another job they used to take the out-patients to outside hospital. General hospital there. You would go where they assign you one nurse and one guard to take a group. And bandages, dental work and eyeglass. They provide all of that, you see. That you got to go outside the camp.

GG: And what was your job, then, with the--you worked with the hospital?

UK: Yeah.

GG: And what was your job? Did you work as a guard part of the time?

UK: No, the guard comes weekly. See, they assign one guard and one nurse.

MM: Oh, you were in the camp hospital 'cause of your leg?

UK: Yeah. Now I had to go with them outside, you see.

GG: But, for treatment, or you weren't working for the hospital or helping out? You were in because of your leg, in the hospital?

UK: No, no, no, no. I just---my leg didn't bother me at that time. I was limping little bit but didn't have any bothers enough to lay up, you see. So, I was all right. I just work there.

GG: I see. You helped out.

UK: And then, if you connected in the hospital, of course you can't do two job one time, so, you are all part of a camp duties. Previous to that I was one of barrack captain, so it doesn't matter which way I go I had to work for them. You know why? Because I was younger age than these older fellas. All the fellas was old. I was around what? Only 50's [46 years old], isn't it?

GG: How many people in the camp all together? Do you remember?

UK: Gee, I had all the record someplace. The biggest we had about 3,000. Ah. (Laughs) They gather that in later days, you know, from Tule Lake or San Francisco area. They had a relocation center or something, they used to call that. They close that and they--no--those guys who would give 'em that bad time in that camp, I think, centers all out of the

bigger camp. 'Cause small block more strict, you know. There's no children and no female. Just the men is in there. And those who are married and those husbands and wife was intern. Then they were sent over to family camp, they call. Was at---it was Texas, Crystal City. Crystal City was it. And, in time, you fill application, go out. In later days. And they approve and they let you out. But, not in the worse cause. Mostly, in the middle state and East Coast. Course, lot of fellows went to Utah.

GG: How did you get, like laundry soap or shaving stuff or personal things that you needed? Did you have to pay for or did they supply?

UK: Ah, early stage when we first pull in over here, Sand Island, for razor give you one camp. One camp was six or eight people was in one tent. And, 'course there's a camp captain there. And they gave one razor for one camp. In charge of a captains 'cause some of the guys, they tried suicide, you see. Cut up. Was very strict. Anyway, that was the style, how they start. So, they let us shave and 'cause I didn't stay long enough to cut hair. But, there was a barber in the dorm. And barber's outfit was left to the guy who volunteered for barber, you see. And everything was set up pretty nice. 'Course clothes, in like later days, you can write to the home and they used to send to us. Like me, they won't let me communicate for, oh, 'bout a week. And they all thought I was going to send back home, 'cause most guys they pull in, they send out to--first, they call in immigration station, then they question you there for many things. I stay immigration office or building for about two days. They easier send out to Sand Island. Then, when they....

GG: Then, when you got to Santa Fe now, how did you manage about shaving?

UK: Oh. They have a canteen and run by the internees. 'Cause they, I think that they supply by the main office. I think was merchant comes in, I think the wholesalers used to--I'm not familiar that. But, there was a canteen and you can buy.

GG: You could go and buy like...

UK: Yeah.

GG: ...candy or cigarettes?

UK: Yeah.

GG: And then, you had to use your like 10 cents an hour to buy those things?

UK: Yeah. That was later days, you see. When the money they sent from home, from Hawaii. They held up in the office. And, they allow you so much a month from your own money. They won't give you too much or not you might break out and escape, you see. (Laughs)

GG: Did many people try to escape?

UK: Well, not--the only one. In the other time, let's see, after we left Houston, the second place we went....We went early in the morning. Get off the train. We walk about a mile toward camp. And not from our group, but the other group. The Mainland group. There was a group of Mainland group in Alaska and Hawaii and some was South America. Oh, Central America. Like, what's that country now?

MM: Panama.

UK: No, no. Ah, 'cause Panama more like United States, eh. That's why they didn't have any trouble. But, see, I just knew this morning; I was thinking about it. Peru.

GG: Oh, from Peru?

UK: Yeah, there was a group from Peru, too. So, they send money from home. As I say, they keep 'em and they allow you so much. So, just like, you know, daily life. It wasn't too much difference. Only....

GG: How did the different, you know, the people from the different groups get along? Now, like, did you become friends with some of the Mainland people or some of the Peru people...

UK: Yeah.

GG: ...or did they kind of stick together with their own?

UK: They--'course their camp is different. They arrival is different time, you see. So, but some of them they had one, two, three--their friends stop different area, you see. Area getting too big. So, we didn't have too much trouble. The only time we had trouble was the roughneck gang was sent over from Tule Lake. Mostly they was Niseis came back from Japan, eh. They were for Japan and they didn't want to take any orders from officials. So, they send them up to Santa Fe. And they keep in a different area. Different compound. We had little trouble there. And those rugged guys, if some of guys didn't want to take any orders from official, they pick up and they send somewhere else. But, I don't know where they send to. Nobody knows, except....

GG: In other words, they didn't want trouble makers.

UK: Yeah, that's right.

GG: Yeah.

UK: They segregate 'em, you know? But they came back in later days. And they realize that they don't get anywhere.

GG: Did many people, you know, what kinds of things did they have to go to the hospital for? Was there much sickness in the camp?

UK: You mean in the camp? Yeah, as I say, Japanese doctors there. And they check them up. If they need hospital, they put 'em in.

GG: But, what kind of things did they have to go to the hospital for?
What kind of sick?

UK: Any kind of a sick. I mean, if the thing is serious kine, send 'em out outside hospital, you see. 'Cause they didn't like disease. They keep 'em in the area.

GG: Like, flu?

UK: Yes, well, they very careful on those things. There's so many guys stay in one place, eh? So, first they come in, they used to give us shots and doctors get health check-up. That's one of the first step they take. And those who need attention, they give 'em a proper treatment. They don't want epidemic spread around, you see. The very good sanitary condition.

GG: Were there many fights between people?

UK: No, not many major trouble, you know. So many guys, they always have little trouble. Some of the kitchen guys steal that rice, you know, from the cooking pot and make moonshine and they have a good time. (Laughs) But, besides that, it's nothing. No hard kind to speak of.

GG: So, you were going to say what kind of food you had to eat, too.

UK: Well, they says that's in the last now, code they have, isn't it? So, there was food supply like prisoner of war. And that, I think, regulation was to supply same as their own troops. Like soldiers, so, mostly like, you know, good food. But, we can, as I say, we can go to headquarter and ask different type of food. And they can change 'em if they--it's up to the head of the camp. And this fellow was, was Johnson, his name was. Was very nice gentleman. And we didn't have any trouble at all. He listen to reason, you know.

GG: Did the men in the camp organize say their own entertainment? You know, what--this is probably a funny question--but, did you have time or make fun while you were in there?

UK: You mean amusement? Yeah, we used to have a stage show once in a while. Least, when you get 3,000 men, you bound to have, you know (Laughs) enough guys to make those things.

GG: How often did they do that?

UK: Well, sometimes once a month. Sometimes, yeah, one of the most of daily life was right after the breakfast. This group here like newspaper reporters, you know. They form group and they news broadcast about a half an hour. They allowed the newspapers come in, you see, newspapers. And they take it from there. (Translate) from English to Japanese. And they broadcast every morning.

MM: You folks had radios in the barracks?

UK: Ah, no. I think radio wasn't allowed in there.

MM: Oh, so they go on the microphone or something? Loud....

GG: Loudspeaker.

UK: Oh, you mean loudspeaker. Ah, no. We don't need because right after the breakfast, if no rain, they stay together on, you know, outside. So, you don't need that.

GG: Like all 3,000 men outside?

UK: What?

GG: All 3,000 men?

UK: No, no. Not in one group. Different compound get different (men; reporter would read or broadcast to a few hundred men) group, you see. There was enough newspaper reporter, too. Now, even today, that local papers, Fred Makino--he's good. He wasn't in. But, Mr. Soga--he was in himself. And mostly, Hawaii Times bunch went in. The people used to say, Makino was part Englishman, you see. (Laughs) So, the FBI guy didn't pull him. Was a very few of us. But, that's the rule, I guess. And there was good reason. They needed Makino outside. They need some people outside too, in the community. And they left behind. Otherwise all Japanese guy, there's no way to tell them what supposed to do and thing like that.

GG: Were Soga them at Santa Fe same time you were?

UK: No. He was one of the first guys to pull in, 'cause way up in the north, by Montana and Wisconsin, you know. The first and second trip, group, went north.

GG: So they were not at Santa Fe, then?

UK: Well, they came back--came down to--they all got to Santa Fe.

GG: Eventually.

UK: Eventually, yeah.

MM: Did you folks, you know when you--how far was the camp from town, Santa Fe town?

UK: Oh, just, where was it, from here to the, we can see, you know, to lot of the Temple, the graveyard.

MM: Oh, yeah.

UK: In our case (on a vacation years later), when I went to the Mainland, we took private car to come down Santa Fe. With some, it was what was I would like to see. What I want to see anyway. See, where was in. (Laughs) Then, we stay in that town.

GG: This was on a later trip, you mean?

MM: Later trip.

GG: So that you could see.

UK: Yeah. We took about week, was it? A week, 10 days. Stop here and there, you know. Travel daytime and at night time and take it easy daytime, you know.

MM: The camp was still there when you folks went?

UK: No, no. Camp was no more. Was town. Sears and Roebuck was there.
(Laughs)

MM: Oh, you mean the town expanded?

UK: Yeah.

MM: Sheesh. Did you folks get to (during internment), like go to the store in town--like if you went to the hospital or something, did they let you stop off in town?

UK: Yeah. They were not supposed to, but. (Laughs) But nurses--I tell the nurse I want to buy something. She say, "Sure." And then we would say, "We won't bother you. We stay out. So, you go ahead and buy what you want."

And we had--well, I told the guys I go in town. "What you fellas want? Just tell me. I may be able to get it." And, they used to let me buy the things. Like noodle, chickens. They would come back, cook that outside of our regular food, eh? We had enough cooks around.

MM: The people--the town's people--were okay? They weren't too hostile?

UK: Oh, yeah. They, you know, in my personal...they give me a army officer's uniform. Jacket and shirt and all that. So, treat me like a army officer.

(Laughter)

UK: And you know, people around there mostly Spanish.

(Exchange of greetings with Mrs. Katamoto)

GG: And why did they give you the army officer's uniform?

UK: Well, because they want to make some difference, I guess. They used to working for the official instead of for their camp duties. That why I go out the camp duty. I never went but once or twice I went out with the group to pick apples. You know, the small apples?

MM: Crab apples?

UK: Yeah, the farmhouse. There was no labor, so they're aching to get some help. Then, if you want to go out, we put application and they let you out. So many guys one day.

GG: Ah. So now, how soon or when was it that you got out and how did people act when they knew....

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

MM: You folks knew the war was pau, eh?

UK: Yeah, when the war is ended, then--I don't know why they did that--but they ship us by train to Seattle. [In a round-a-bout way.] Down the south, you know. New Mexico to Seattle [by circuitous route], so, I guess they treat for us to see the United States.

(Laughter)

GG: How did the camp act when they found out the war was over and how did they hear that the war was over?

UK: Well, those the daily news is comes in. They allow you outside the newspapers in the camp, you see. So, it was first, ah, let me see. A-bomb was fell to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We took (learned) the same day as any civilians took. We knew about the war. Ah, let me see what I was going to say. Yeah. When we got on the train by...Santa Fe and and we went to a middle states and east coast. We passed through that steel town.

GG: Pittsburgh.

UK: Pittsburgh? And was all over the places. We just pass, too. You know, train stops at so many stations and we can see.

GG: They don't let you off the train, though?

UK: Yeah. What I was going to say that, now? Yeah, we seen the Detroit, Pittsburgh, all those places, up till Seattle. When we got to Seattle, they assign us to Old Sailors' Union's Home. And, the immigration station--in Seattle, it wasn't very much far from sailors' union quarters to immigration station. We used to go eat every meal to immigration station there, too. There's no big kitchen in the sailors' union, I guess. And they provide bus, you know, and take us three times a day. And, same as usual, you know. We was sightseeing Seattle town. There's not much to see, but....

GG: So then, how did you come home? On a boat?

UK: On the boat. Small troop ship. Now, that was a tough trip, from north to Hawaii, eh? Rough seas and November is winter time.

GG: And how many of you came home on that ship?

UK: Mostly, around 300. We had people from Hawaii--that was about 300. Almost 400, I guess. But, mostly [we] came back on a first trip. But, few was left over to finish up the camp details. Oh, there was so many cruises and things, you know. Put 'em in shape and turn over to our bosses. So, they kept few mens. Oh, about two weeks they were behind from us. We came in November.

GG: You came on the first group?

UK: Yeah, yeah. That was hard--small troop ship, you know, and so many people only. No freight, so, ship roll, you know. Oh, everybody get seasick. 'Cause I never know anything like seasick, so, I was all right.

GG: And what was it like when you landed in Honolulu when you arrived?

UK: Well, I didn't--'cause it was good to see family, you know, when I get home. Few of my friends and my kids and wife was waiting at the pier. And, we shake hand and it was good. Was just--nothing special. We expected all those things anyway.

GG: Were there lots and lots and lots of people there, though?

UK: Oh, yes.

GG: And then, how did you go about picking up the pieces of your life and going on? Were you resentful? Were you angry about the time?

UK: No, I felt we lost a good three years. In fact, three years and 10 months. Almost four years, eh? And when I come back there's all my friends is made big money and they sitting pretty. During the war time, you know. They all was willing to work, you know. They made easy money. And mostly my friends was their own business. And they sure made good fortune. But, I was out for that (time).

MM: What happened to the money you had, like before the war? You folks had a car like that, eh?

GG: And property?

MM: Land, like that.

UK: I think I had the Plymouth. There still was car there. Your uncle, my son, wants to sell our car and buy motorcycle. Just like you, but...

(MM Laughs)

UK: ...my friend's mother told him not to, because we need the car in case we relocate. If something like that happen, you see. So, he hang on to it. I think we still have the car. Four years, yeah?

GG: What about your property? You had property before then?

UK: I didn't have any---see, I was intend to go back Japan. See, my first son was there already. As soon as the second son, the one living here, finish--he was going high school here--but, June (1942) I was going to go back. But, that was following June. So, I sold the house and lot I have. I still at Pauoa, right below...that's where we used to live. We sold all that, so I didn't have any property left. You know, the money I had, send in Japan bank so for us, out.

GG: What about the store? Now, your wife continued to run the store all the time you were gone?

UK: She run it. She couldn't quit because the government won't let you quit, you see.

GG: But, your friend owned the store?

UK: Yeah.

GG: Your friend owned the store?

UK: Yeah, that's right. It was a small store, you see.

GG: Yeah. Was he Japanese? The friend who owned the store. Was he Japanese?

UK: No--yes, he was belong to a Schuman Carriage Company. The house in that area. Camp. And, we was a friend to this (Scotty) Schuman's. His own--the Japanese guy--he has a friend, the one who put up our store. He's always Coral Garden Motor over here.

GG: But, they didn't take the store away from him?

UK: No, no, no.

GG: During the war.

UK: No.

GG: If you had owned it, would they have taken it away from you?

UK: No, no. I owned it then. (Bishop Estate owned the building and most of the surrounding property. We had rent-free use for collecting rent from Filipino and Hawaiian tenants in the area.) Under my wife name. They wouldn't take it away. They was all right. They won't let you quit the business. But, they don't need to. I think that's what brought--my wife brought the kids up. The only thing, you got say wholesalers give you so much goods according to the past record. So much you get merchandise, you bound to make money. There was so much money then, you see. If people wants to buy, almost anything. But, if you want to buy soda water, you cannot buy any amount. 'Cause you got to give 'em an empty boxes to get the new shipment. So, they seems all right, I guess.

GG: So then, when you got back from the war what did you do then?

UK: Well, let's see. I got back in November. Then, I was thinking going back to my own boat building business again. Then, can't buy the material. Was limited, you see. And the wholesalers don't give you for new openers. They got to supply their own. So, the guy who used to own the boat shop in Kalihi, he came to me and I work for them. So, I took the job. But, before that, see all the kids are grown up. Four years, you know. So, we need the house. See, the house we had now, too small all of us live. But we can't buy the material. We can't buy the land. Cost too much money. But, anyway, we manage to get--buy the land if I wanted. We were friends, all my friends was, "If you need the money, we had the money so you can use it. So, you can open up your own shops if you want to." They were very nice.

After, I says, "No, no, no. Wait, I can't buy those materials, so I no sense open." But, what I got to do is to make my own living house first. And this idea going back Japan is out already. You go back Japan you can't hardly make a living.

So, my wife used to send lots of our food stuff for Japan from here. Such as Carnation milk and things like that, you know. So, all those kids was baby then. I mean, my nephew and thing. So, they even today they says, "All this kid came up by your wife's sending." They couldn't buy anything down there. They didn't have any money and they haven't had any goods too, you see. Right after the war. For them, they appreciate it.

And, so going back Japan idea is off. Then, I got to buy big house. Then, I went all around town to get the house. There's nobody want to sell a place. And if they want to, they want sky-rocket price. You can't buy. Oh, I went Manoa, just below Woodlawn.

They had pretty big place and real estate friend says, "You can buy that and cut up the place. You might make money, if you can swing it." It was a little too big. I was thinking whether we buy or not. And then the other guys come around and buy 'em too. Had no chance. They was buy---and Makiki I tried to do the same thing. When I was thinking buy it or not then the other guy came and buy 'em. And, so, I finally come to Kaimuki and pick up the old house, you know. Was Claudine Avenue. And it was big house. And across the street is built on. You have to--each house have a 10,000 square feet--and these owners, 5,000 and over. Well, my place was only about 9,000. And, not enough to make two houses. Oh, the meantime all the kids finish university and normally live in the house except once happen I tell the wife so, we might as well go down to Kakaako and live there instead of going back and forth, you know. So, after they got married, I rent it. Instead having to pay high taxes. Kind of foolish to own the house. And, we didn't have any trouble renting it. Good rental, too, you know. And, they wanted to buy the house. So, I say, "All right." We sell the house and I bought 'em over here (Kahaluu). And I first figure I would come over here weekend. Get away from downtown busy area. And I did that for about year. I come down Saturday and stay Saturday night and Sunday. Either go back Sunday night. But, I get enough of that, too. Back and forth. And then, the grandchildren started come out.

And I think it's a good place to bring up a kids. No cars and clean air. So, we start living there (Kahaluu) altogether.

GG: It's been about an hour. You tired?

UK: No, no. I'm all right. At this rate, we can never get finish.

GG: I wonder if maybe you could tell us about the boat building business. You know, from start to finish. How you went about building your boats. How people came to you to have a boat made and the process. What happened.

UK: Well, you mean a later days or early days?

GG: Well, why don't we go the early days first.

(UK Laughs)

UK: Yeah, we start that before, didn't we? Little bit.

MM: Yeah, little bit.

GG: But, I don't think you told us too much.

UK: Yeah.

GG: Because, you know, lot people now, those kind of boats are hardly built anymore, so we don't know how, what happened.

(UK Laughs)

UK: Yeah, that may be interesting. In early days as my father used to run...this is around 1900 and--I think he came out about 1904, you know. Well, when I say I was born...

MM: 1896.

UK: ...1896. I was about five years (or eight years) when the father left Japan, so I know a little bit. I don't know much. Yeah, somewhere around 1904, I guess. Those days only small boat...24, 28 feet long, you see. That's the Japanese type--sculls--oars, instead of an engine's power. Only one-man affairs. I mean, only the boat building. And, he takes over and finish himself. And when launching time come, all the boat owners get together and help 'em carry out to sea. Just dump 'em in the water. That was process in those days. Then, around, when the fishermens from Japan, he brought 36 foot boat. He brought ready-made boat on the steamship. He didn't---there was no way to build a boat then, in Hawaii, so he bought the boat and tried to do fishing right off the entrance from Honolulu Harbor till Pearl Harbor. That's where they used to catch aku. They used to use a scull or the sail. After that, then tried to use a power.

That's when my father started, I heard. And, he goes to Honolulu Ironworks and Von Hamm Young. They're the two big dealers for engine.

Gas engine, of course, in those days. Around 10 fishermen get together and scrape up enough cash to buy the engine. In some cases they won't be able to put up that much money. The builders, like my father, he finance the boat and mortgage the boat to buy the power plant [engine]. Then, finish up, let them go out fishing and make those aku boat. They make every week's catch. They divide the money.

GG: And they pay your father so much?

UK: Yeah, well...

GG: Catch.

UK: ...they take 60 percent for crew. And 40 percent for boat owners. That's the way they divide 'em. And crew carries, pays their food expenses during the fishing week. And, both of us got to look after the boat repairs. First of all, from the total catch they take out fuel expenses. That's got to come out first, you see. And that's all the expenses. And to catch equipment---the equipment that catch bait such as net--that's most big item. And, upkeep the boat. That's boat owner's share. They got to pay that. And, that's why they [boat owners] take 40 percent after the fuel expenses paid, you see. And the crew takes a 60 percent; they pay their food expenses. They [the crew] divide the money and take their shares to home to their living. And those who want to save their money from there, up to them. Mostly, they used to take 7--no--10 years, say 10 years if you have the boat.

GG: How much did the engine cost? Do you remember?

UK: Ah, no, I don't remember. They cost more than the boat. Power plant [engine] cost more than the boat. Always been.

GG: How much would the boat maybe cost to build?

UK: Ah, in those days, I haven't got any figures to remember. I know in the later days, after I tried to run the shop, nineteen--but you can imagine I used to pay--my father time a good man a dollar and a half a day. I working nine hours a day. Seven to five. Not hour, you know. One day. (Laughs) Second-class man is \$1.25 a day. And those average carpenters, pay-wise.

GG: About what year was this?

UK: That was around 1911-1912, eh. Then, things start pick up and we increase the pay, the good pay to \$1.50 to \$1.35, \$2.00, \$2.25 and \$2.50 around just when we first went back Japan. So, around 1914-1915, you see.

GG: And how many men did you have working?

UK: Sometimes, I remember, we had about eight, nine. Close to 10 with the labor. Depends how busy we were. We used to make, two, three boat one time, see, in the small one. Like some months is nothing. We just

stay on repair yard. And, after that, that fuel expenses--bigger the boat, bigger the engine. Is coming too much. And, almost no pay. So, we try change that to diesel engine. Diesel. That was--first diesel--I put 'em in. Was around 1924, I think.

MM: Were you the first one in Honolulu to do that?

UK: Ah, yeah, I think so. But, that's for the fishing boat. There was already some small freighter, had diesel engine. Like those--no more those company now, but those freighter was mostly from here to Honolulu. They used to grow rice here, you know. And pineapple later days. Right around there. All around here [Kahaluu] was pineapple field. And, instead of having truck--there was no railroad here. Railroad end by...

GG: Kahuku.

UK: ...Laie. See, Laie Sugar Mill used to be. So, there was a railroad there by sugar mill, but Kahuku was most big plantation anyway. And Waimanalo there was no train. They always been a dray or a truck. Must be a dray most times. It wasn't too big plantation anyway, Waimanalo. Small area. So, when they grew up a rice and pineapple, they used to take boat from me. And there was one company. He used to be, his son was friend of mine about my age. Lo, his name. And his old man was quite a politician then. Well known. Ah, what his name was? Even Lo. Even Lo. Eben. Eben. Yeah, that was his name. They used to come in here. And the most a boat was a diesel engine. They started gassing. And fuel started it up, so they changed to diesel power. But, we take the point from there. See, if we can save so much money on the fuel, it pays to put in diesel. So, by then, I was connected with Hawaiian Tuna Packers. And Hawaiian Tuna Packers big stockholders was Mark Robinson. You know Mark Robinson.

GG: That's a lumberyard or different?

UK: Was Alan Robinson, that's lumberyard.

GG: The lumberyard. Yeah.

UK: Those family. Mark and Chris was two brothers. They used to live on Nuuanu, that graveyard now. I think Mark Robinson is living on Diamond Head Circle now. His wife, his second wife. His wife passed away, first one. And second wife, she married to--she's kind of a politician too. Sonny Hart's sister. You know Sonny Hart was connected to City government? Yeah. That right. I forgot the name now. But, anyway, this Robinson had union agent. And he was a big stockholder for Tuna Packers, so he used to--be anxious to sell the union. He sold quite a bit to the union, too. That's the first one we put it in the fishing boat. Then, it's so much saving, so every other fishermans kind of jump in too, you see. Then, some of them, they started dealing with the Iron Works. I bought couple engines from Iron Works, too. They're [the engines] Imperial--ah, there was a Western Standard [brand], the gas engine. Then they turn to diesel engine, but it wasn't very good. A

heavy diesel. Then, this Imperial Diesel Engine was very well improved and Iron Works took over that engine. And, he been carrying that. That's the most popular. They're the big company and they can finance better. In those days, there was a, the insurance rate. Many insurance rate so high, the fishermen can't afford pay the insurance. So, they took the risk. No insurance. But, nothing was happened though.

Was only one boat broken down engine and there is drifted there half way Japan, past Midway. And, Japanese liner picked up. And tried to tow boat but it couldn't make it. Too far away and sea was too rough. They cut the boat loose and then just brought the crew back. And when that old captain came back he cried for he lost all his capital, you know. But, everybody get together and made a--put back--[collect money] for his fishing business again with a big boat. He died about 15 years ago. I think his son is still in business--the fishing business.

GG: Do you remember the name?

UK: Yeah. Kashiwabara his name was. And that was only boat--though there was another one around 1914. We lost one big boat, that going to Midway--way, you know. Necker and all those island, way down the west side. We lost a boat, trace of it. Altogether don't know what's happen.

GG: The crew was lost, too?

UK: The crew was lost, too. And the next one was my friend, or my family friend from the father's. You know that university professor, Amioka?

GG: Hm.

UK: Well, his father his, next the boat got lost with a five-man crew, I think. That's, we lost altogether. That was two big boat they'd lost. I remember.

MM: You folks built both of the boat?

UK: Eh? No, I used to one. Amioka's boat. But the other one was the other builder's. And we lost one boat, too. This a smaller boat. It was supposedly fishing just off Molokai. And when sea get rough, you know. They get pretty rough. They disappeared. We never got trace of it. We send a special boat from here. Sent, there was not so much Coast Guard so much help then, you see. There's only one tug, Coast Guard. There was no extra, no plane and no way to search.

GG: When was this? About what year?

UK: It was 1912, I think. It was 1912 or 1913. I think 1913. So, we was busy but one of the boat--yeah, that Amioka's boat, there was in port. They volunteer for us, bunch of fishermen were only left Honolulu, go around the fishing area, you know. They know where the fish run. It's

off Lanai, Molokai. They went in Kahalui, Maui. And then, my father was building the boat for Kahalui and Company, so I went in the boat. Oh, he had five men with him, so if this trouble happen, I can't handle. So, I told the father, go back and I took over the place in Maui. To finish up the job. So we make two boats there. One small freighter and one good size fishing boat. Well, that's the boat, a total loss with two crew. It's too bad for the crew men. They were making good, you know. But, they all fishermans. They know what they think they can do.

So, old man says that, "You fellas carry sail." They got a mast on. If anything happen on your engine, you can at least sail little bit. Might take a month to get someplace, but you get there. But, if no sail, or nothing.

But they say, "Oh, no need sail. Bumbai, bumbai, we put it on." They never even have the sails, you see. So....

GG: And how long did it take to build a boat, say one that was what--30 feet or so--from when you get started?

UK: Well, as I say, it all depends how many men you put 'em on the job. You figure enough hand and if owner wants in a hurry, well of course they want in a hurry. The sooner they kick, sooner it can make money. Well, used to take about month anyway. See, we used to have a plenty lumbers then. Not like today, you know. So, we don't have to wait for material to make the boat. But, engines you might--there's dealers run out with. Got to wait for month or five weeks, you see, to get the engine from Mainland. Especially, some of the engine made in the West Coast. It take longer. They take by train and transfer to ship or they take a route from Panama Canal and shipload, why they takes send over. So, a big boat at least about two, three, sometime four months. And, put men on a job according to the length of service. We didn't have any trouble.

GG: Then, when you launched the boats--from the picture I see--[photo of boat launching] you know, all kind of flags, and it looks like some kind of tree?

UK: Celebration, yeah.

GG: Yes, can you tell us about that?

UK: They customary, they celebrate even they don't have any money. All the friends do it for them anyway, you know. They start make mochi, eh. The rice cake. They throw that for good luck. Sometimes they put prizes in the cake itself. They get that and they break--they get prize tag and get good prizes. Was a quite few celebration they used to have and usually they big party throwing.

GG: On the boat they have a party?

UK: No. No, only in the house. They usually put up a tent. And, we builders, they throw us in the water. But, I couldn't afford to get

any good watch. They always get thrown in this...

(Laughter)

UK: ...you know, the guys come around and throw me over there. That's why I move out to Kewalo. One good reason. I had the lease in Kakaako but it's quite a ways take 'em on the carriages, or truck or we used to use mule, those days. They used to get a mule or I think older days, you know, I remember they had the jackass. They had a dozen jackass on the line, you know. And, most Portuguese fellas was good handling those animal. And few Hawaiians. There used to be a Hawaiian Dredging or Draying Company, was Hawaiian Draying and Construction Company. They used to get this Portuguese and Hawaiians as drivers. Those good fellas they can handle those dozen animals, good one, but... some coming, they don't work. They (the animals) just lay down, some of 'em. So, even the lumber strike was no more. They used to carry the dray.

GG: And then what about now the significance of all the flags and it looks like a branch or part of a tree on the mast? Is there meaning to that?

UK: Well, that's--we used to get that bamboo from Manoa Valley. Use that for the--to put up the flag. They, even Japan they do that, even today. You see sometimes in the movies, TV's, eh. They--it shows that. They carry that, especially fishing village. The same way.

GG: Is it good luck?

UK: That's it. It good luck. Celebration.

GG: And did they have--I think you started to tell us once before about the fishermen's association? Did they have many of those or did they have celebrations or, the fishermen's association?

UK: Yeah. They always had two. Three, sometimes. If they tried to make more, some man got to broke. There's no room for so many. They always been originally two doctors put up the money and they put up--one is Hawaiian Fisherman's Association. One is Pacific Fisherman's Association. One is run by Yamashiro Hotel owner. And, Chinese dealer, fish market. Was half owner That's down there...market, Kekaulike near King. And there is orginal below that, right in the corner of Nimitz Highway and the Kekaulike. Now it's Okada Fishing Company. I think he's got this. They used to have that. That originally belong to Cooke family, that land. I think it still does. And, they lease it from them. And some of his money, he caught in that too. That was one group. Those two was the major. Then little later, there's another one came out. Honolulu Fishing Comp--this especially, mostly fishing--fishermen. But, I think the money came from the, ah, I think it's one of the doctors, too. Doctor must have easy money and they good money-maker, you know. They investing.

GG: Were these haole doctors?

UK: No. Japanese. They can't. They's got to investment, that fishing business. I don't--haole fellas would not go in fish. That was a headquarter in Aala Market. Now, it belong to Otani. He's hold in the United Fishing Company. And, he's handling--he's one of the big ones. I think he's the only one now. Biggest one. Fishing company.

GG: And what did the Fisherman's Association do? What was their--what did they get together for?

UK: Well, there lots of business. First they got to look up tax affairs--how they adjust their taxes. And, next thing, they ought to get the bait....That's the major problem. They always used to be. Now, it's University of Hawaii or....

END OF SIDE TWO.

TAPE NO. 3-39-5-78
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Usaburo Katamoto (UK)
February 21, 1978
Kahaluu, Oahu
BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

GG: Okay, this is an interview with Mr. Katamoto in his home and the date is February 21, 1978, and the interviewer is Gael Gouveia. Okay, I thought you could tell us about the harbors. Tell me about the harbor.

UK: We'd been talking last time. Where did we stop there?

GG: Well, we had sort of finished up on the war and how you came back. And the boat building operation itself and how you did that. And then we asked you at the end of the last interview if there was something that you thought we ought to know about--that you hadn't told us yet and you said maybe about Kewalo Basin and how things kept changing around and moving around down there.

UK: Oh, after the war.

GG: Right.

UK: We talk about before the war, previously, didn't we? When the first small fishing boat was moved to Kewalo with shallow entrance. No big boat cannot go in. Just wide enough draft. Did we say about that?

GG: I don't think so. I don't know. I'm not sure. I think maybe you touched on it lightly but you didn't say too much about it.

UK: Yeah, that was about just when I move into Kewalo Basin. I move in Kewalo Basin to the Tuna Packers' yard at 1924 I think. Yeah, I think 1924.

GG: And that was before Tuna Packers [moved to where it is now].

UK: Yeah, Tuna Packers was up to the upper place. It wasn't down the waterfront yet. Now, just when they move down to--they got, I think they already got the lease there from the Territory then. They start making the places, cleaning up and get ready to build the packing plant. See, the packing plant was up above, above the Ala Moana now. It's between Koula, that's Waikiki side of Koula Street. I think the warehouse is not there now. But it was until several years ago. In the later days the Fujii, Fujii Juinichi Shoten took over that and made it

sake brewery. Sake and shoyu brewery.

GG: But that's where Tuna Packers was originally.

UK: Yeah. Yeah, originally. Their plant. Tuna Packers' plant. It wasn't big place. The place getting too small so they decide to move down to waterfront. That's where they can unload their fish from the fishing boat right into the plants. That's what their aim was and they did that way too. That's when I move down to Kewalo [about 1924] when they got a small marine way to hold the small boats up was there. But it wasn't a big scale. Just a small-scale and it's just handles the small boat only. Around about, well, say about 50 feet. There wasn't very big boat at that time in Kewalo Basin. As I said, the place was shallow and they cannot get in there rough day. When sea got rough they cannot enter to the place. And when the tide is low the 50 foot boat cannot go in. Only the small 30 or 40 foot boat. So their aim was just a small boat at that time. And after Tuna Packers took over, they enlarge that marine way. Well, I did the most after a while. I work for the Tuna Packers in later days. Previous that, a German fellow, Puck his name was. Peter Puck. He was originator. And was the same line of business. We used to be pretty close. When the Tuna Packers took over his business he was kind of--his health was kind of run down. So I took his place and he help me out all the time. As I say, he was a good friend.

GG: This was at the Tuna Packers' dry dock like?

UK: Yeah. Right now. Well, then previous to that has Peter Puck, we both move Kewalo fishing boat harbor. He took the job to make...the name of the boat was Pioneer. It was kind of a ferry from Pier Two where's the Immigration Station to Sand Island Quarantine. Didn't I say that before?

GG: Yeah, I think you did.

UK: I think you got the name some place. Then, he took the job. This fella City Mill owner, Chinese fella, Ai, he owns that Kekaulike fish market adjoin Waikiki side. What's the name of that firm now? It's still running. He been, he's quite a business man. He owns City Mill. That originally they put up for rice refinery. And he turn into building supply business. And mostly is lumber. Today's City Mill has lumber supply?

GG: Right.

UK: That's his business was. He was financier and a capitalist. And he tried haul pineapple from Kauai to Honolulu to pack. Oh yeah. He was involved in Honolulu Fruit Packers. It used to be up, I think, Kalihi. Well, he was a big business man. He still is. I think he's pretty good age now. But I saw his name still in the business field. I suppose his son is taking over the business I believe. I don't know Mike Puck. He got a hold of that Pioneer, this sail boat like ferry. And enlarge that. He join about 40 feet I guess. And his intention

was to carry freight in between islands. And the only place that can get the waterfront was Kewalo. And he can throw in when sea is calm. But he couldn't get out when sea get rough and low tide. But anyway, he got up there. I know he made that ferry boat larger. In fact, longer and wider but they add a section to it. Made it longer, you see, in length.

GG: How did they do that?

UK: Well, they just cut 'em in half and add a section.

GG: Oh, I see. Yeah. Right in the middle.

UK: And adjoin boat. And this Peter Puck was quite a shipwright. He came from Mainland but he originally came from Germany, I guess, to United States. When he came, before he come to Hawaii he was working in the Navy Yard for Federal government. And that's all tie up in that union business, you know. I been talking some time ago. Small union was involved. You know, 10 or 11 men. What was that--used to call 'em Shipwrights Brotherhood of America or something like that, the title was. And it was the union but it wasn't a big scale. And it's got to be American citizen to be a member or approved by the member association. Only 10 men, you see. And my father been mixed up with them the same kind of business. My father was a specialist of small boat. And they are big ships and steamers like that. And big liners come in to harbor and take minor repairs and make fittings of a cabin or things like that. So they used to go, you see, work on that thing. So when they shy man they ask my father to join them to help 'em. So they been good friends and tied up in. And I carry my father's business. And they took me like a junior partner. See, there was no question arise when I went ask job for Honolulu Drydock. Floating Drydock. 'Cause they were sole workers in that firm, you see. And when they shy hand they come ask me to work for them, with them. So we was in good tie up among us so I didn't have any trouble to work with them. So I been kind of a mending around one evening that ferry boat longer. It was quite a job, you know. And quite an interesting job too. And I wanted to know how to do it. (Laughs) So wen watch them right along. And they just cut 'em in half. Add section to it and build it together. You know, just like kid making a toy longer. It's very simple after you know how.

GG: What did they use to join it together though? Where it had been split.

UK: It was a wooden boat, you see. And used a metal for some places. It's just like olden days, you know. A steel frame and wood tie into that. Even today, some of the ships the same way. So we, woodworkers, still got the job, even the steel. So they claim the steel hull today. Even the big liners, same way. Only he made the ship larger. He couldn't get out. It's hard to get out. Then Territory was ready to dig the place anyway. And that's how he took chance to make it in there. He thinks it's not him, it's Ai. You know, those big businessmen, always tie up with the government. Workers, anyway. So they know how they can get 'em out if in case they stuck. And after they finish they take out the ship. They enlarge the harbor. Make it deeper.

GG: How did they do that?

UK: The Hawaiian Dredging took the job, you see. That was before State, so Territory job was. And then after they dredge out, widen the channel, then any size fishing boat can come in and out. Most time unless the weather get really bad, you know. Storm and they could get danger to come in. Then they used to run into Honolulu Harbor, you see. Anyhow, in later days, they used that ferry boat as a freighter for quite a while. And I think they sold that either South Sea Island or Philippine. I think it was Philippine Island but I'm not sure. That's how the most, a first step to Kewalo Basin was changed anyway. So, fishing boat can go in almost any kind of a weather, in any tide.

GG: And do you remember about what year that was?

UK: As I said, that was around...when the fishing boat start move in, stores and supplies weren't in. And when that was...it's 1924, 1924. So I think that, enlarging that ferry business was around 1921, 1922. I'm not sure now. But I think around there. By judging I move out there then. The stores moved down there too. They used to be all up Kakaako way, you see. Toward town. As soon as fishing boat move down to Kewalo, and they follow the group. They used to supply the grocery and the fishing supplies. So they move out with the fishing boats, you see. Let me see now.

GG: What was the next change after that?

UK: Next change after that is the Tuna Packers moved out. That's the major change.

GG: And that was again approximately what year?

UK: That's 1924. This is all after I came back. I went on a second trip. See, we left to Japan, 1915. Let's see. Yeah, that's right. And right around that time, fishing boat power, engines, are changed from gasoline or diesel to a diesel. That's the major change was again in the fishing business. Yeah, that was around 1924. I moved down 1924. I still had the lease in Kakaako. But I had the chance to go in Tuna Packers. Yeah, that's why I went down with them. And I carry the Kakaako lease until lease was expired. Now it's a Federal building now.

GG: When you went to work for Tuna Packers, now, you still carried the lease where you had your boat yard?

UK: Yeah.

GG: But did you build any boats there during that time?

UK: No. You see, it was kind of a peculiar setup. I didn't want to wait for Tuna Packers in there because I thought there was a chance to make good in my own boat building. But still I had the hope. And from the Tuna Packers itself, instead of hiring me by true salary, had to pay me

more. Instead, he pay me--oh, he pay me pretty good salary. Then commission basis over that from--not canning end of it but dry dock end of it. In any business connected to a boat I got percentage coming on top of the monthly salary. So, it was good for both of us. And that was agreement I went in first. Then when Tuna Packers getting real big and stockholder change hand...you know, Chris Holmes, he got a hold of that thing. And he had it, more or less a playthings for him. This big businessman--A & B. Allan Davis. He was running the business for Chris Holmes. And for Chris--oh, he was, you know, his mother was a millionaire. Now what I see is she used to own a big business in New York. Gee, I forget things. But anyway, she got a hold of this Tuna Packers to keep Mr. Holmes something occupied his time. So he don't run into mischief.

(GG laughs)

UK: He used to like liquor. You know, he's the one that put up Waikiki residence next to aquarium. Ah, what we used to call it? Later days they came to be a....

GG: A hotel?

UK: Hotel. One restaurant.

GG: Queen's Surf?

UK: Not the hotel. Restaurant. Not the one right next to....

GG: Not as far as the Elks Club but before that.

UK: No, no. That's way down the downtown side. And right adjoin to aquarium there.

GG: Yeah, I know where you mean.

UK: Yeah. Well anyway, it was plaything for him so they didn't care much. But when they took that Mr. Davis on in too, he's set up like more or less a business way. And he put Mr. White used to be a--Andy White used to be a president of Dole Pineapple Company. And his brother, Cloris White, was working for Dole Company, but I think Mr. Davis and this White--they're cousins or something like that. And he took Cloris White, put 'em in manager for Tuna Packers. And I used to know these fellas for years by I been taking care all Hawaiian Pine boat business. See, they had more or less that boat in Lanai. Not that tug; Lanai manager had private fishing boat. Use it for weekend recreation, fishing. And when he wants to come to Honolulu, he use that same thing. Same boat. And they had kept the thing up with operator. Then upkeep, they used to give me all the job. It was my job.

So we knew each other pretty well and he said, Mr. White says, "that it's no sense you working, these peanuts operation." He says, "I give you your straight salary, your daily salary, and you be well off."

And you don't think you are ending up on the salary. In later days you maybe do your own business on bigger scale."

Oh, I say, "All right." He was talking to me by same. So I took that as he said. Then 1930's I got trouble with my leg. The same leg been bothering ever since, you know. It wasn't bothering so much but once in a while it used to bother me. Then I had to lay it up. And they had that big fuss in the company.

Mr. Holmes said, "Well, we can't afford to get a sick man on the job. So we going to let him go." So Mr. White, the manager, he couldn't go against the big boss, you know. So he had to agree. And I had several job was going. New boat building. But I finish it while I was laid up in the hospital. The workers, the one who I left to look after building and everything, they still working Tuna Packers today. They almost--some of 'em is retired already. But the one is running the place, dry dock, he still works there. I met him the other day. And he comes up once in a while. He just like my own kids, you see. 'Course he's younger, much younger. And, so I told him I won't cry for job 'cause I can get boat building job any place. So, it didn't hit me so much. They pay me, I don't know, six months salary or something like that. And I got through with that Tuna Packers. Then I work for Floating Drydock. I went back again. (Laughs) I been working waterfront anyway. Then they got union trouble. I think I talk that little previously. The Hawaiian Pine get the tug.

GG: Right.

UK: And I got to refit that thing.

GG: Yeah.

UK: So I was working Hawaiian Pine. The war broke out.

GG: And they let you go [continue to work] anyway 'cause you donated the money, right, to the union.

UK: Yeah, to the union. Yeah, to get understanding. Instead of standing on a picket. Yeah, that's right. That's what we talk about. So we got to go back to the Kewalo Basin change, eh?

GG: Right.

UK: Yeah, I went up to the Tuna Packers changing their plant. And that's about all, isn't it?

GG: I think you told me before, but I'm not sure, how I guess where Ala Moana Boulevard now comes across. It used to be open there. Is that where the Ala Wai feeds out into the water there?

UK: Oh yeah. That's way by Waikiki end of it.

GG: Yeah.

UK: Used to be salt field. You know, Chinese had the salt field there. High tide come, they put the sea water go in. And shut the gate. And throw the sea water on the field and make it dry. And then rake it up and put 'em in the trough like, you know. Make the salt water richer (dried in the field, more concentrated). How they make that Hawaiian salt.

GG: Uhm.

UK: I mean real Hawaiian salt. Those the one that they call Hawaiian salt now is only rough ground, rock salt (that) comes from Mainland. There's no more Hawaiian salt any more. They (Hawaiian salt) taste much better, isn't it. More or less, you know, not that too salty. And cooking, they claim Hawaiian salt is better. Especially for pickles and things. Anyway, that what it was. That's Ala Wai Canal. And when they get big rain one year, I don't know what year was it, I think one or two persons died. The water comes from the Palolo area, you know. Come down to Moiliili, University Avenue around; they used to run into the sea. There was a small, little stream like, a brook like, eh? Then, after the storm, the Territory started digging that place. Make it better. Avoid from that damage. For next one, anyway. That's how they start that Ala Wai Canal. I'm sure that's where it was. I think you can get that data from some other books. [Ala Wai Canal constructed between 1919-1928]

GG: Yeah.

UK: Then they make it deeper. Then Honolulu Harbor, first, pleasure boat try to enter the Kewalo Basin. But they are much deeper draft, you see. So they cannot get in there--too dangerous when sea get rough. So, but they got to move out to Honolulu Harbor because harbor is getting narrower, smaller for the big liner to go in and out. That's how they move that yacht harbor out there to make that deeper and deeper, so they can go in any time, you know. Now they call "Magic Island," isn't it? There was another entrance toward Waikiki end of that--fill up that place. The dredging site fill up outside instead of inland because, I think, inland was all been filled up already. By then, on that Ala Wai Canal to Ward Avenue, there was a swamp land more or less. It wasn't too sea water. But water from the upper stream, you know, comes together having a tap on.

GG: Yeah.

UK: They used to keep a tap there. Then some of the Chinese used to raise Rector.

GG: Raise what?

UK: That some kind of a--was that called "Rector?" What's the name of that Waikiki restaurant they have Princess Kaiulani? Chinese restaurant. I think Rector. You know it comes along, it comes between the, adjoin and goes right in the water like seaweed, I mean water lily.

GG: Oh, lotus. Is that it?

UK: Yeah. Just like a lilies. They give you flower, too.

GG: Yeah.

UK: They used to raise that.

GG: By the duck pond.

UK: And there was that above the Moiliili area. McCully. By old Honolulu Stadium. That's where I used to live when first I come back from Japan. Next time. I mean second trip. That pond, when we had it, I think, it's the only pond that raising it now. In Waialua. Right beyond the Haleiwa, you know. Used to be a U. S. Marshal--Cox, Hawaiian. We used to go out that place I remember strictly. I think that's the only place raising it today. They raise a good ones. They grows up, you know, and soft.

GG: And what do they do with that?

UK: Oh, that's eating. That's a delicious piece of a cooking for Chinese (the lotus). And even Japanese. They claim it's very rich.

Yeah, that we jump [subjects] again. But I didn't read about it. You know, the typing you left for me? About Waialua. [Copy of Waialua-Haleiwa bound transcript volume] Well, we used to go up there quite often.

GG: What time period was this when you used to go out to Waialua?

UK: Oh, that, just a minute; I used to go just recently, eh. But way back.

GG: Before the war?

UK: Oh, yeah. Way before the war. Before I went Japan, 1915. Didn't I say that, I used to own the motorcycle?

GG: Oh, that's right. You did. Yeah.

UK: Yeah.

GG: But I didn't realize you went so far.

UK: Yeah, we used to go around the islands. Half of the island one day. Go down Pali way and come back Haleiwa and Wahiawa way. Well, ever since, oh, it's a long story. That's a good recreation for us at that time. It's only about one dozen motorcycle in the Honolulu area.

GG: Oh. And how far back was this?

UK: Oh, this was around 1913. I bought the first one, first motorcycle in 1912. Why I bought it, I used to go night school after work. We quit

work 5 o'clock. We hurry and finish the dinner, take a shower, and to to night school. I used to go first I started on Washington Place now.

GG: Washington Place?

UK: Yeah. That right on the corner of Alakea and Beretania. Upper side. There used to be a church. This Japanese Congregation Church. They used to have a night school class there. Those younger set come from Japan you know. They use Japanese. I think the Reverend was teacher-- used to teach us. Then, I used to go with the bike. And I lost two bikes right in a row. I can't afford to do that.

GG: How did you lose it?

UK: Somebody stole 'em

GG: Yeah. That's right.

UK: Right on the roadside, you see. So, I told the (my) father buy me a motorcycle. They cannot steal because it has license and number on it. And very few in those days. So he agreed. He paid me--I still remember--he paid me a \$250 or something. And I bought it from a fella works for Hawaiian Pine. He used to be mixed up with the Hawaiian Pine already then. And I didn't have any more trouble. We need the license to ride the motorcycle, you know. But here it comes again. Friendship. See, there was a licensing company. Commission, and they still in business. Well, he was a middle-age man. He was very good man. He used to have his office on the Young Hotel. And so my father was the power boat mixed up so we was a friends. And I tried ask him to give me a license. He say, "I have to inspect you how you ride." But he says, "I watch you from Young Hotel upstairs." (Laughs) "And you ride." And there was so many less traffic, you see. No danger. The bicycle and buggy and hack and no automobile. So he been peeking from there. And I took the motorcycle around the block. He say, "Oh, you all right."

(GG laughs)

UK: And he grant me a license. I didn't have any trouble, you know. Well, that's the way we start mixed up with the Waialua, that pond too, you see. On the way back we stop there. We used to eat at Haleiwa. A snack. And we used to go out there.

GG: Did you take your snack with you or was there a place down there?

UK: No. There was a eating place right in the Haleiwa--restaurant still there. That's on the...

GG: Sands?

UK: ...Kahuku side. No. It was building. Kahuku side of the Haleiwa Hotel. Right past the bridge. It's Haleiwa town we used to call 'em.

There's only one dozen stores right around that area, you know. And that's how I knew Waialua and plantation there, too. And my mother's cousin used to live out there. And sometimes I go on the way back. And stop out there. And they kill me a chicken...and dinner, you see. That's the good old days.

GG: How long did it take to go to Waialua from Kakaako on your motorcycle?

UK: Well, somewhere around 12 o'clock we leave Honolulu. Mostly my friend was German ancestry, boys used to live at Alapai. Now it's a car barn. And right around there. And right next door is Kakaako and Punchbowl. That was a German saloon. Beer hall like. Used to call the Aloha Inn. And that place was run by their mother. There was two brothers. There was one bike among the two. There was two, three fella from Alapai used to own the bike. And some from the other area. I don't remember where from. But anyway, we five, six motorcycles used to go together. There was only two Japanese boys. Myself and one cycle store. Used to be Yoshikawa Cycle used to run it. The father was running bicycle shop. And they had the Indian (name brand), my kind of motorcycle. So when we go with only two Japanese boys. And myself is just a kid, you know, 13 years. And you know how Japanese are. Short, although I was pretty tall among Japanese. But it wasn't tall enough to brace up your motorcycle when it start to fall. See, the Haleiwa Bridge by Heeia....

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

UK: But it was just the grids with above. Now today is bridge, eh. And it used to be muddy when it rains. All the mud runs on the bridge, you know. It was only about 20 feet bridge. And can't walk on the side. Oh, walk, you know. It was very narrow. There was hardly any automobiles. It was safe, you know.

GG: Yeah.

UK: So I had to carry Hawaiian boy with me. Big and tall.

GG: On the back of your motorcycle?

UK: Yeah. Back seat so he can brace up, eh.

(GG laughs)

UK: When you start to fall, you see. (Laughs) That place and the other one is just before Kaaawa Beach. Used to be a sand road. Even today, I think, when it get real rough.

GG: High tide.

UK: The wave carry the sand up on the road.

GG: Yeah.

UK: Well, used to have the same trouble. Skid, you see. So for this purpose I used to carry the Hawaiian boy, who used to live Kakaako. Close my house, you know.

(GG laughs)

UK: We had all kinds of a things that made you laugh.

GG: That must have been a real adventure then in those days.

UK: Yeah, I was pretty roughneck, too, you know. I used to have the pictures with the neckerchief, you know. Hawaiian kind of a handkerchief. Red.

GG: Sort of the palaka cloth?

UK: Yeah. (Laughs)

GG: Oh, this was before you were married, though, and before you had children of your own.

UK: Oh, yeah. Before second trip to Hawaii. I not first ship yet. Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

UK: Was around 1913, you see.

GG: And you were only 13 years old. You didn't have to be a certain age to have a license?

UK: No. I was 13 in 1910. So I must be 16 years old.

GG: I see.

UK: I think that was the age limit. I just barely make it.

GG: Yeah. And your father didn't worry about you?

UK: No. It's the mother been worried.

GG: Oh. (Laughs)

UK: My father was a small man. He was only--he stands just about five feet. But my mother was a big, husky woman. She's big size. More or less like Hawaiian type, you know. And that's why I think myself and my brother--they fairly big. I mean, you know, 5 feet 6-1/2 inches I used to stands. So among Japanese it's....

GG: Very tall.

UK: It's the tall side, you see. So that's the time I bought the new bike on 1913. I bought old one 1912. And I had just about a year. I got

one of the new ones. And father used to buy things for me because I used to work hard and he don't want to lose me.

GG: Yeah. That was a lot of money, though, to take out at that time.

UK: Oh yeah. It's a big money those days. I think those things are selling around \$700 now. I still can't forget that thing yet. The brand name was Flying Mercury. It was a Harley Davidson. Till today it's a good motorcycle.

GG: Yeah.

UK: I think Harley Davidson used to go around \$550.

GG: In those days?

UK: In those days. And the engine, seven horsepower. I had bought the engine but mine was small. Five horsepower. Smaller piston, you know. There was a larger size with seven horsepower. That was--do you remember Wall Nickel Sports? The store on King Street? King and Fort. Near King and Fort. There was a big sporting goods. Oh, I think that's a big store. Used to sell books, sporting goods and hardware. All kinds of things. Big store.

GG: What was the name of it?

UK: Wall & Nickels. Wall. W-A-L-L. And Nickel. Nickel and dime no nickel.

GG: Yeah.

UK: Wall & Nickel. I think there no more that name now. Anyway I bought the new bigger one. Flying Mercury in 1913. I took my kid brother next to me. To around the island trip. A good day. And I didn't have a light yet. And brand new. And, you know, you got new outfit you want to try it. I didn't wait for the light and I just took off without the light. And we stop by Haleiwa--my mother's cousin's place and they give me dinner. It was getting late so I said we better go back. No more light. And I start to hurry back. Then when I come to Schofield, almost dark. Then this army sergeant--we used to know each other for the motorcycle group, you know. He says, "I lead you town so you don't need a light." So he especially lead me to town. Of all things it's a great story. When I come to Waipahu, now that exchange. Used to be a road down below with a small bridge, you know. We come over there, my kid brother lost his grip, the foot. And put his leg, foot between the spoke and cut up the heel, you know.

GG: Oh, my goodness.

UK: So, as I said, I had the neckerchief. I took that and wrap it up. And then we hurry back to Honolulu. Then when we get to town, sergeant left, but you don't need light. So it was very easy, you know, even at the police station. They never come after me. (Laughs) So....

GG: What about his foot though?

UK: Well, I didn't go home. I go home my mother going to give me scolding, you see. Father was all right. So I stop at my father's friend doctor. Was a good surgeon. Japanese army doctor was.

"Well," he says, "it's all right. You never lost your leg but I don't know how you going to go to school. Your father won't stand for absent from school. You got to go to school every day, though." But he treat it. He stitch it up, you know. And I think kids those days was healthy, too, eh. So we got over that. But I had to carry him in the morning before public school. He used to go Royal School then. That's on Alakea Street. Then is Japanese School on Nuuanu and Vineyard. On Ewa side. Used to be a Japanese language school. Well, I used to take him to the school, Japanese school. Language school start before the public school. Public school start 8 o'clock. And language school, 7 o'clock. Only one hour. In fact, 45 minute less in the morning. So I used to take him to language school and wait one hour. I would kill time around there, you know. Then I taxi him to Royal School. Then, come back to work.

GG: This was on the motorcycle, too, you were taking him?

UK: Yeah. Yeah, I get no more enough. I only had (Laughs) one 10 dollar gold piece saved up myself. We never carry currency then, you see. It was a gold coin. And doctor took me away. I say, "Doctor, my father is not going to pay. I pay. And that's only the money I have. If this is be enough."

"Well," he says, "it's not enough but it's all right. We call it enough."

(Laughter)

UK: He took my 10 dollar away. I had no money to hire hack man. It used to be a hack, you see. No taxi.

GG: So how did you pay for gas then?

UK: Well, I can charge it up to the....

GG: At the boat yard? I see.

UK: That I didn't have any trouble. And motorcycle is only use a little bit of gas.

GG: Yeah. That was another thing. There was a tank big enough so you could put in enough gas to go clear to Haleiwa and back?

UK: Yeah. I think either 2-1/2 or 3 gallons. It was more than enough to make around the island trip. Yeah. It was.

GG: And what did your mother say when she finally....

UK: Well, mother wasn't so pleased. She says, "You got it in yourself. You got to get up." She was pretty good, you know. Broad minded. But she

never say, "Help you."

GG: When you had your own children, did any of them have motorcycles or want?

UK: Yes. I didn't bother them much. But the time was change already. Some of my kids--the first boy, the one in Japan now--he was junior in high school. They only one year difference. Yeah. Then he went Japan. So the next one was following year. Entered to high school. So when war broke out, he's just a junior in high school. And he wanted to change the motorcycle. But his mother and our friends didn't go with him. They says, "You need the car when in case we evacuate you cannot carry on motorcycle." So that's the reason why he kept with the car.

GG: Where did they go to--your children went to Pohukaina School all the way through?

UK: Yes, they did.

GG: And you were active in the PTA [Parent Teacher Association] at Pohukaina School?

UK: I wasn't very active in public school. The PTA, it wasn't so strong as today, wasn't it? Yeah. Was a very little activities going on those days. PTA. I mean as far as Japanese community is concerned through part of the school because most parents was immigrant. They had come from Japan and they couldn't understand the language they speaking.

GG: Yeah.

UK: That was one reason. And the second reason--the PTA wasn't so active. Especially like Kakaako area. It's very few, they're not one nationality, mostly like Filipino immigrant later than that, you see. So I guess that's how it was. There wasn't very much activities going around then as far as PTA is concerned. But when you come to language school, well, that's all the Japanese community come support them to pay the teachers and school expenses which is don't amount much.

GG: But what was the feeling about the children going to the regular English school? Perhaps the immigrant parents couldn't help that much but they seemed to place a heavy emphasis on education both in Japanese language school as well as in the English public school.

UK: Yeah. They encouraged the children to go to the school as most Japanese parents even here went. They taught very heavy for school education. Even those days. That's what makes Japanese children pretty well school educated, more they can afford anyway. That's what I believe. That not only myself. To any Japanese parents feel the same way. There's no parents say, "No, you don't have to go public school. You just go language school." Oh, they never say that. They say public school you got to go 'cause you can't get away. But language school, if you can you should take up. That's the way it was all the time.

GG: What if the children had a hard time in public school as far as understanding or, you know, if they had homework, things like that, and the parents couldn't help?

UK: Well, that was a drawback.

GG: Did the teachers help in cases like that?

UK: Yeah. Mostly, you know, Pohukaina School teachers was mostly Hawaiians. And very little Caucasian teachers, I think. And they understand that situation. Oh, they were very kind.

GG: Was Mother Waldron at Pohukaina already when your children were going to school or did she come later? The one that Mother Waldron Park is named after?

UK: I think it was in later days. The whole park was under the name of-- Atkinson Park. Mother Waldron, I think, came in little later.

GG: And then, when your children were growing up what did they do for recreation, say when they were in elementary school or did they have lot of chores or did they have to work? What did they do for fun?

GG: Well, they didn't have very much of a time after school. When you finish public school, you go Japanese school. Stay, later days, I think about two hours they used to stay. And some families, mothers work and they wanted kids stay in school to keep 'em out of mischief. So they didn't have very much time to spend around the street. And some days, they mostly used to go to church. If they don't go Christian church they go Buddhist church or something like that.

GG: Which church did your family go to?

UK: Oh, my family used to go Shingon Mission. That's on Keeaumoku and Sheridan.

GG: That's in the Sheridan district, right?

UK: Yeah.

GG: Was it called Sheridan area?

UK: Yeah. Keeaumoku and in between Keeaumoku and Sheridan. Was right below King Street. I don't know--the second lower street. I think it's Sheridan Street. I'm not familiar in that area. Oh, that my family religion. We were taught to carry that. Not supposed to change. One who picks up a family means it's first boy. Well, after that, I said any girls married, like they marry and they got to follow...

GG: The husband.

UK: ...that part husband's family. So I didn't bother them much. I let them go where they please. All my daughters, all of 'em Christian

except the eldest one. She goes to Buddhist church. My grandchildren goes to Christian church. So it doesn't matter. I was thinking I let them go. Not only myself. Most families the same way. They let the children choose what they want.

GG: Is that, though now, in your generation were you allowed to a degree to choose what you want or you had to--were you the eldest son?

UK: Yeah.

GG: So you carried on what has been your family's tradition.

UK: Second son (younger brother), who goes under same name, (if) he's the first one to start that family, he usually carries the same religion like the family. Except, there's no such a thing, if no sons. The family's only daughter and you got to get son by marriage. Well, (by agreement, the daughter's husband) that got to carry the daughter's family's custom, you know (can take on the wife's family name by agreement also).

GG: That would be if you only had daughters and no sons.

UK: Yeah. And another way--the family name is going to change. The son's family name is going to be his wife's family name. But those are the one create the new family. My brother. Well, he use same family name like mine. But he's originator of that family. So they, as a custom, they go same religion as old one.

GG: I see. But now, you had to carry on your father's family's religion?

UK: That's right. Yes.

GG: Which was this one that you went to at Sheridan?

UK: That's right.

GG: And that was a Buddhist church?

UK: Yeah.

GG: I see. And did you go regularly?

UK: No. Maybe once a year.

GG: Okay. Well, maybe we can stop today. Oh, I know another thing I wanted to ask you. While the children were going to school, your wife was already working in the store?

UK: Yeah.

GG: When did she start in the store? When? What year in the store?

MK: 1931.

GG: And the children were in elementary school at that time?

UK: Yeah. The first daughter...

MK: 1930, I think....

UK: ...is between 1921 she was born. Or 1920. And the last one, (around, about) 1930. The first one 1920 and the last one 1931. I had two son and four daughter.

GG: So after school did they come to the store then or they went to Japanese school and then they came to the store?

UK: Yeah.

GG: And then you folks went to home.

UK: Japanese school here and that's Koula, below Queen Street. And Pohukaina School is right next to it. They close by.

GG: So they walked from Pohukaina to the Japanese school and then they come to the store when they're finished with Japanese school?

UK: That's right.

GG: And then where was the store in relationship to where you were living?

UK: Next to...store in front and the separate cottage behind the store.

GG: And what street was the store on?

UK: Was on the Ala Moana right in the town side of the Davies Warehouse.

GG: I think why don't we stop there today and then maybe next time if Mark and....

END OF SIDE TWO.

REMEMBERING KAKA'AKO: 1910-1950

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
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